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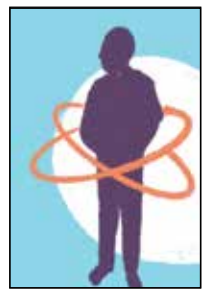

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WASHTENAW JEWISH NEWS

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Watching the kids: Dror Israel with Ukrainians in Warsaw

By Sophia Blumenthal

Dror Israel is an organization that seeks to create a society of democracy, equality, and peace where all share responsibility, benefit from opportunity, and realize their own potential in Israeli society. In Israel, Dror Israel works with young people in the Russian and Ethiopian communities, runs coexistence programs, and supports social justice.

In mid-March, Ann Arbor Israelis Sophia Blumenthal and Yelena Adelman went with Dror Israel International Relations staff to Warsaw to provide childcare for Ukrainian refugee children. The following words are selections from Sophia's journal of her experience.

FIRST DAY

People are asking me a lot of questions. Lucky for me, I don't have a lot of answers. I know that we'll be in Warsaw. The refugees stay in a convention center, with us at a hotel nearby. Childcare runs in 3.5 hour sessions, morning and afternoon.

Since I don't speak Ukrainian, what will I do? Truth is — I don't know. Maybe I'll just pantomime, like I did when I taught Hebrew in ulpan. I'm grateful that Yelena will be there with me. She's a Russian speaker and a fellow Camp Tavor alum. She has yet to steer me wrong.

As for how I'm feeling: the word in Hebrew is *soeret:* stormy. It means being blown about emotionally. I'm choosing to ride the storm and see where this goes. Actually, it helps a bit not to know that much going in. I can rely on my improv skills and not let the overthinker in me take control.

Day 2

Almost all the refugees are lower middle-class women and children. Upper-class people generally had places to go or could stay

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A JCLP graduating student's 2-year retrospective

Emily Gordon, special to the WJN

On Sunday, May 1, the University of Michigan School of Social Work's Jewish Communal Leadership Program will host a graduation celebration in honor of the Class of 2022.

As a member of the graduating cohort, I've spent a lot of time lately (when not focused on final projects) thinking back over these jam-packed past two years and all that's happened within the time period.

Although my cohort's entire first year from fall 2020 to spring 2021 was virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we learned a lot about perseverance, teamwork, and how to create silver linings in the midst of obstacles and uncertainties.

Karla Goldman, Director of JCLP and Sol Drachler Professor of Social Work, helped us learn more about who we are and who we want to be in Jewish communal spaces, while also being thoughtful about what we each bring to and take away from those spaces.

We had some rejuvenating outdoor and masked in-person meetings and participated in enlightening virtual site visits and talks with alumni who shared their insights and takeaways from their time in the program and experiences in Jewish communal work.

JCLP Class of 2022 at Sukkot Open House: l to r back row: Moss Herberholz, Emily Gordon, Ezra Brown, Miriam Chesterman, Interim director Alice Mishkin. L to R front row, JCLP Director Karla Goldman, Rachel Levy, Clare Lauer, and Erica Kuhn-Fink

All that we learned virtually as first-years was directly translatable to our mostly in-person second year, during which we were able to plan and facilitate joyful and fulfilling seminars and programs that allowed us to stretch personally and professionally.

Alice Mishkin, Class of 2013 and doctoral candidate in American Culture, served as JCLP's exemplary Interim Director for the 2021–2022 school year.

We kicked the year off with a fun and meaningful new student orientation at the School of Social Work, during which we second-year students learned from and bonded with new first-year students as well as each other.

As the colors of the leaves changed, we held a thought-provoking and spirited Suk-

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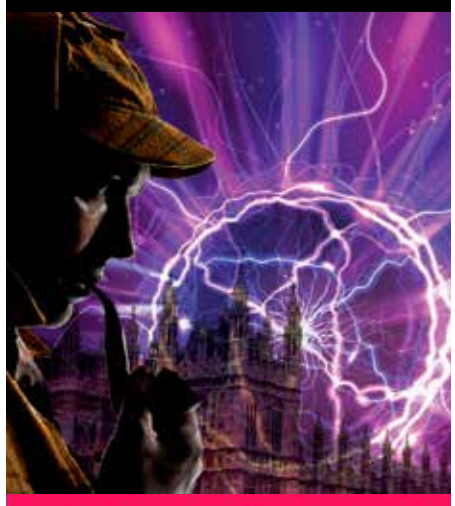
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From the Editor

My sister Sheila was born in 1940. Fifteen years older than me, she and I often see the world through slightly different lenses. She's more cautious and more organized. And she lives in San Diego where the sun shines more often than here in Michigan.

Clare Kinberg

It wasn't the Vietnam War, Watergate, or even 9/11 that sent her into a tailspin about our country's future. I think that began with Bush's lies that led us into the Gulf War. Since that time (until very recently) she would daily read the papers and watch the news with an ever-growing sense of dread. Now, the news creates so much anxiety she can barely bring herself to read the stories of economic dysfunction (fruits and vegetables in California not being able to get off the farms), Putin's war on Ukraine, racist violence, the banning of books and closing of minds.

So, she calls me up and asks, "What should we do?" As if I might have thought of something that she hadn't.

My sister and I both keep plodding along, taking our long view of history which includes countless dire inflection points when terrible suffering has led people to think, how long can this go on?

Imminent total disaster stories, like Chicken Little proclaiming "the sky is falling" go back at least 25 centuries and are told around the world. In a favorite version I remember from reading to my kids, one of the wiser animals invites all her terrified friends into the kitchen to do some baking. By the time the bread is out of the oven, they all realize the world is not coming to an end.

In these pages of the *Washtenaw Jewish News*, I hope to invite readers into the kitchen. I'm committed to focusing on news of those who are creating solutions to problems, doing acts of kindness, and writing with thoughtfulness. My glass is overflowing with gratitude for each act that helps to mitigate suffering now and on the horizon. ■

Sheila and Clare Kinberg circa 1978

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Afghan and Ukraine resettlement updates

By Mira Sussman, Jewish Family Service

Between October 2021 and February 2022, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County resettled 295 individuals from Afghanistan. In just five months, JFS received more newcomers than it had in the previous four years combined.

As of the beginning of April, all Afghan families have moved into new homes and apartments. Adults are being enrolled in JFS' employment programs, and most families continue to receive case management services. Many adults have already become employed, and JFS' English as a Second Language program is returning to in-person classes.

Moving into housing allowed JFS to enroll and coordinate transportation for 95 children in local schools. School staff throughout the area have been incredibly helpful and supportive in this process, and in helping students and parents begin to acculturate.

Hundreds of new supporters, donors, and volunteers have become involved with JFS from throughout the community. JFS has received 454 financial gifts towards the Afghan resettlement effort, as well as gift cards, furniture, household items, and other forms of in-kind support. Many new volunteers joined our experienced volunteers, and helped to move families into housing, deliver groceries, support JFS staff in doing the resettlement work, and helped in countless other ways. Now that the Afghans' basic needs have been met, the process of acculturation and settling in begins, an ongoing effort through ESL classes, employment, and reaching out to neighbors and children's classmates.

The Afghans' resettlement process is far from over. They arrived in the United States on a visa called Humanitarian Parole. This status was the fastest and safest way for them to come to this country, but humanitarian parolees are required to apply for asylum within one year after arriving. JFS is gearing up to assist each Afghan with these asylum petitions, which all must be filed by October through November of this year, depending on the client's date of arrival in the United States. An asylum petition is an enormous undertaking; one individual's paperwork can fill an entire banker's box. JFS has partnered with HIAS, the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC) and its network of pro bono attorneys, and especially the Palmer Rey law firm, to meet this tremendous endeavor.

In response to the unexpected influx of arrivals and the strain it put on the US refugee resettlement infrastructure, JFS is part of a nationwide initiative to involve more entities in the hands-on work of resettlement. This initiative, called the Co-Sponsorship Initiative, has the agency partnering with six local congregations to form a co-sponsorship group. These groups will each work directly with a refugee family, providing for all of their resettlement needs in the first year after arrival. This includes raising thousands of dollars for rent and other necessities, recruiting and training a network of volunteers, securing and furnishing housing, greeting the family at the airport, and ensuring basic needs like food and transportation, conducting cultural orientation, finding employment, and more. It is an enormous undertaking, and these congregations are to be commended for taking on this work.

JFS expects to recieve up to 350 refugees between March and the end of September 2022

As the Afghan resettlement initiative winds down, JFS' regular Resettlement and Placement (R and P) program, which accepts refugees from throughout the rest of the world, has already restarted. JFS expects to receive up to 350 refugees between March and the end of September 2022. These refugees will primarily be arriving from Syria, Congo, Sudan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Myanmar, as well as a smattering from other countries.

While President Biden announced that the United States would accept 100,000 Ukrainians who are fleeing war in their country, as of this writing there was no announcement of a plan to facilitate these arrivals. JFS has received Ukrainians in the past and expects to welcome more in the coming months, as well as to support any Ukrainians that recently arrived on their own. In preparation for these arrivals, JFS co-sponsored a fundraiser on April 10th with the Ukrainian American Crisis Response Committee, will continue collaborating with local Ukrainian aid groups, and is creating new partnerships to prepare for the next crisis response effort.■

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Eileen Pollack explains why she's "The Wrong Kind of Woman"

By Judy *Bolton-Fasman* reprinted with permission from *JewishBoston.com*

Eileen Pollack recently spoke to **JewishBoston** about her new essay collection, Maybe It's Me: On Being the Wrong Kind of Woman. Pollack's literary dexterity is on display in es-

says that recount soul-altering trips to Israel and Poland, one-of-a-kind field trips to abandoned Jewish cemeteries, and the upside-down world of dating in one's 50s and 60s. Throughout, her inimitable voice leads readers to hidden places and unexpected conclusions.

Judy Bolton-Fasman: The title of this wonderful essay collection works on multiple levels. At various times, you found yourself being the "wrong kind of girl" or the "wrong kind of woman." Would you speak about some of those experiences?

Eileen Pollack: I'm also the "wrong kind of Jew" and the "wrong kind of Jewish woman," which I especially felt raising my son. As I put these essays together in chronological order, I couldn't think of a title for the book. But at the time, I was dating a man who had been an editor in New York and prides himself on his ability to think of good titles. He hadn't read the book, but he asked me, "So, what is this book about?" As I was describing the main essay about dating in New York, I said, "I don't know, maybe it's me." We were hiking through the woods, and he said, "Stop! That's the title." I always tell my students, you don't have to plan when you're writing, say, a short story collection or an essay collection, how they'll be interlinked; there will be common themes. Somebody wrote to me and said I had managed to express who I was in this mosaic of essays.

JB-F: You were the only girl who raised her hand in math class in high school. You loved science. You loved books. What was it like to be in the first wave of women who majored in science at Yale University?

EP: I was the only woman in my science classes, and I was the second woman to earn a physics degree. I always liked to write, but when I was told I couldn't take science and math courses in high school, I decided I'd show them. That's when I developed my passion for physics and math. I was going to apply to study physics in graduate school and I asked my quantum mechanics professor to write me a letter of recommendation. He said he would only do it if I took a class that wasn't physics- or math-related, because once I went to grad school in physics, I'd never have time for anything fun, anything I loved, again. So, I promised him I would take a writing course. John Hersey was one of my writing teachers. He changed my life. I felt so understood by him and so much less alone than in my science and math courses. I took nonfiction writing and then fiction writing with him. I walked away from physics and math and went to the University of Iowa writing program.

JB-F: Your novel, The Bible of Dirty Jokes, was in part an homage to the old Catskills comedians. How did growing up in the Catskills influence you as a writer?

EP: It was a very crazy place to grow up. Most Jews my age couldn't wait to get away from it. It was "Old World," and we were more modern. But I predicted there would be a time when Jews would be nostalgic for the Borscht Belt in my first novel, Paradise, New York. The food was plentiful, but it wasn't that good. And these comics were telling bad, dirty stories. Yet it was the place where American Jews figured out how to be American. They could swim and play baseball and get dressed up for dinner. They were in America, but they were among Jews. They could use Yiddish, they could relax, they weren't being judged as they tried to come up in the world. A lot of what I do in my work is trying to show what was going on behind the scenes. There was a lot of organized crime and a lot of sex and gambling and shenanigans. It was not all sweetness and light, and in our town, there were a lot of murders. I'm trying to give a more balanced look at what was going on in the Catskills — the good, the bad, the funny, and the not-so-funny. And I explore women's roles there.

JB-F: You are a writer with a clear-eyed view of her people. You also have a lot of affection for Jews. Do you consider yourself a Jewish writer?

EP: I have two voices: I have a more comic Jewish voice that I channel in a novel like The Bible of Dirty Jokes, and then I have a more serious literary voice. I went through periods where I tried to get the Jew out of my voice and the Catskills out of my voice. But I've learned to not be ashamed of who I am. I'm interested in not only Jewish culture and history and what it means to be a Jew in the world, but actual Jewish theology. I grew up semi-Orthodox. At Yale, I discovered Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem. I was interested in the Jewish view of the universe, and the notion of sanctifying every detail and finding the divine spark in the ordinary. I don't believe in a personal God, but I want to investigate why we feel like we should make the universe a better place. Where did that come from? Is that strictly biological, or is that something that's coming from some force in the universe that makes us want to do good?

JB-F: "All of Us, We All Are Arameans," the longest essay in Maybe It's Me, is about your first and only trip to Israel. You describe an upsetting scene where a hostile crowd trapped you in a taxi with your Arab driver. Did that experience change your view of Israel?

EP: I came away with such mixed feelings about Israel and that surprised me. I was also surprised how much I loved it, and I was surprised that it could be racist. That incident revealed something many American Jews don't experience on Birthright or a standard tour. I told an Israeli friend about the incident, and she asked why I didn't call the police. I said, "I didn't think anybody would care." She asked me, "Do you think everybody in Israel is as horrible as this?" I was ashamed to think that I had. In the essay, I compare the reaction to somebody visiting America and hypothetically watching a Black man getting beaten or somebody who is gay getting assaulted by a mob. They didn't report it because they assumed everybody in America was racist or homophobic.

JB-F: The title essay, "Maybe It's Me," is funny and finely observed. You capture a range of emotions about dating in your 60s. Other than having fodder for writing, were you grateful for any of those experiences?

EP: The gist of the essay is that it's very hard to date men my age and older because we've changed so much, and society has changed too. But I would make all those dates vanish in a puff of smoke if I could. Before the pandemic, I realized New York was too expensive and exhausting. My rent kept going up and then the pandemic hit. People have no idea how terrifying it was to be there in the early months of the pandemic. There were dead bodies piled in a trailer down the block from my apartment. I saw people carrying people through the streets, and no one knew what would kill them. It was also very lonely. My dearest friends lived in Boston. So, in the middle of the pandemic, I rented an apartment in Boston, sight unseen. It's a beautiful apartment, looking out over the Charles River. I couldn't have afforded anything like this in New York. ■

Reconstructionist Congregation May

Second Saturday Morning Shabbat Service, May 14

Ta'Shma 'Pray What!?' 10 a.m.
Shabbat Services 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.
This is a morning Shabbat Service led by Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner. Everyone is welcome! Hybrid in person at the JCC and Zoom. Link will be sent out the week before the event.

AARC Book Group, Sunday, May 15, 12:30–2 p.m.
AARC book group will be reading *Ladies and Gentlemen, The Bible!* by Jonathan Goldstein. The book discussion will be led by Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner. For more information please email Greg Saltzman, gsaltzman@albion.edu.

Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat, May 27, 6:30 p.m.
Hybrid in person at the JCC and Zoom. Link will be sent out the week before the event.
For more information about services or events or to receive zoom links, please email: aarcgillian@gmail.com or go to the AARC website: aarecon.org. ■

Returning to the tribe: Matthew Culberson's conversion story

Hannah Davis, special to the WJN

Matthew Culberson recently converted to Judaism — "returning to the tribe," in his words, a return driven by discovery of his Jewish heritage and a lifelong pull to the faith. Motivated by a desire to connect with other Jews about the beauty and strength of our shared heritage, he told WJN his story.

Matthew was born in Stockton, California. His dad had German Jewish heritage but refused to talk about it due to his own past trauma regarding that side of his family, and would only say he was Black. At the time, Matthew's understanding of Judaism was very limited and definitely did not include Black people: Matthew remembers he and his siblings in their ignorance teasing their dad, saying "we know you're white," which upset him.

Matthew's mother raised him Seventh Day Adventist, a branch of Christianity involving observing the Sabbath and keeping a modified form of kashrut. He had various experiences with Jewish people through the years — some who thought he was Jewish too, based on his religious practices, and some who seemed to recognize a kindred spirit in him — including a high school vice principal named Dustin Hunter. Hunter was a Black Jew who connected with Matthew over their shared observance of Shabbat (Matthew, who was regularly in trouble in school, couldn't do detention on Saturdays!). Dustin would invite Matthew over for Shabbat dinners, which he found "cool and kind of weird. It wasn't my timing yet." He ran into more Jewish people at university, including several professors who said they'd suspected he was Jewish too. He had a conversation with one such professor, Gene Gurkoff, about not knowing why both of their ancestors fled their homes in eastern Europe. Gene replied, "we were all trying to escape for one reason or another."

Matthew was intrigued as a result of these interactions with Judaism over the years. He felt dissatisfied in the Seventh Day Adventist church, and with Christian theology and his experience of being told not to question their practices and beliefs. However, he still found elements of his religious observance important, like keeping the Sabbath. He said, "I kept having these experiences, seeing a Star of David or a Holocaust memorial, and would wonder why I had this attraction to it." This attraction was not yet strong enough to pursue his interest further, though.

This changed when he went to graduate school for chemistry. Having lived in California, he wasn't aware of University of Michigan as an option: he was laughingly apologetic about the oversight, saying, "sorry, all I knew was Stanford and Berkeley!" But his fiancée, Kiara, was also looking for a dental school, so he had to find somewhere that would meet both their needs. The night he finished submitting applications, he remembers hearing a voice in his head: "It was literally as if G-d was talking to me, saying, 'You're going to Michigan.' And I remember laying there in bed, going, 'No I'm not! I'm going to Berkeley!' But lo and behold, I got rejected from Berkeley and accepted at U-M!" Matthew started graduate school at Michigan, even finding — once again! — Jews in his community, in his research lab. Kiara, now his wife, found community in Ann Arbor too: she ended up working at the JCC for Camp Raanana for some time, and "got her mind blown by seeing the Jewish beliefs, traditions, and songs."

A chance discovery of the Chabad house on campus was finally the tipping point for him: he had to find out what Judaism was about. When he called Chabad to inquire, they asked if his mom was Jewish — no — and if he'd converted — also no. "The rabbi said, well, you're not Jewish. But come by Friday night for services and we'll go from there." He and his wife went for a Shabbat service, and despite the new environment, he wasn't afraid or nervous: he felt like he belonged. "I felt comfortable, I felt peace. When the prayers started and I opened the siddur, it was love at first sight: I'd never seen G-d talked about like this … My soul left my body and went into the siddur. I knew I was going to be Jewish."

Matthew and his wife had just started to explore different congregations and denominations when the pandemic hit and in-person events shut down. Nevertheless, they were able to do some shul shopping, and Matthew spent a lot of the lockdown researching Judaism. One big question he wanted to answer was how to find a place in Jewish community as a person of African American descent. He'd "never felt comfortable in white groups," but in his research he found out about the racialized history of Jews, that Jews were not necessarily white, that Jews of color existed. He and his wife joked that the food they got to try at their first service was some of the best of their lives: they were shocked that people who looked white could season their food!

Orthodoxy felt like the right choice for him. He and his wife were already from an observant background, so it felt right to them. Kiara was hesitant about converting but supportive, and his family pushed back on his decision, but "I felt like I couldn't let this go." He felt like his whole life was bashert, destiny, leading him to this point: even the pandemic happened at the right time in his life for him to be able to make such a big change. The two of them began the conversion process, studying with Rav Jared Anstandig and the Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan.

Conversion wasn't a smooth process. The COVID pandemic shut down in-person events and made it harder to study and meet community members. Their sponsoring rabbi was leaving, and they scrambled to find a new sponsor. Kiara struggled with the demands of the conversion process while keeping up her dental school studies. In the end she decided it was too much to handle, and she quit conversion work and declared she would be a Noahide, a non-Jewish person living by the seven laws of Noah. Matthew was torn between supporting his wife and following the calling of his heart. He stopped practicing for several months but wasn't satisfied. "My soul felt dirty. I don't know how to explain it, I felt empty those few months."

He still felt strongly called to the faith and managed to find Rabbi Bergman at Adat Shalom in Farmington Hills to assist with his conversion. Rabbi Bergman assured him Kiara could convert when she was ready, if she was interested. Finally, Matthew was able to set a mikveh date (November 18, 2021) and match the halachah to the calling of his heart.

Still, despite his conversion, his ancestry, and his knowledge of the incredible diversity of Jews, he has run up against barriers in the community across the United States: he has found that "people still find a way to question how you are Jewish," especially if you're not white. People will listen for a Jewish last name when you introduce yourself; they'll ask if you're a convert despite asking nobody else in the room that question; they'll bond with other cultural Ashkenazim in ways that aren't available for people outside that ancestral group.

There are many paths to being Jewish — observant or not, by birth or conversion, belief or heritage or neither. Still, it is hard for many to overcome the impulse to look for people who fit a narrower definition of Jewishness. Matthew says he hates that Judaism has absorbed racial biases in the USA, saying, "it doesn't align with Torah, and it is contrary to tikkun olam. I was told Jews should be the light, set apart, chosen to lead the world. Yet, racism and onas devarim are preventing this."

Post-conversion, Matthew is continuing his studies, strengthening the Jewish community in Michigan, and working toward tikkun olam. Kiara also converted shortly after him because of her own personal calling. They have also restarted an Orthodox conversion because it feels like a better fit for them based on their religious practices and beliefs. Matthew believes you go to whatever movement calls you during a certain time period of your life, because "at the end of the day we are all Hashem's children, and a mitzvah is a mitzvah." He wants to learn Hebrew, learn the melodies, and visit Israel. He was motivated to share his story by the hope that other Jews could realize the beauty of their shared heritage (blood or otherwise). "Doing a mitzvah just because you know it gives you a sense of connection to who and what you are and to Hashem, that's my motivation … It has nothing to do with your race. There were 12 tribes, we've always been a diverse people: kol Israel." ■

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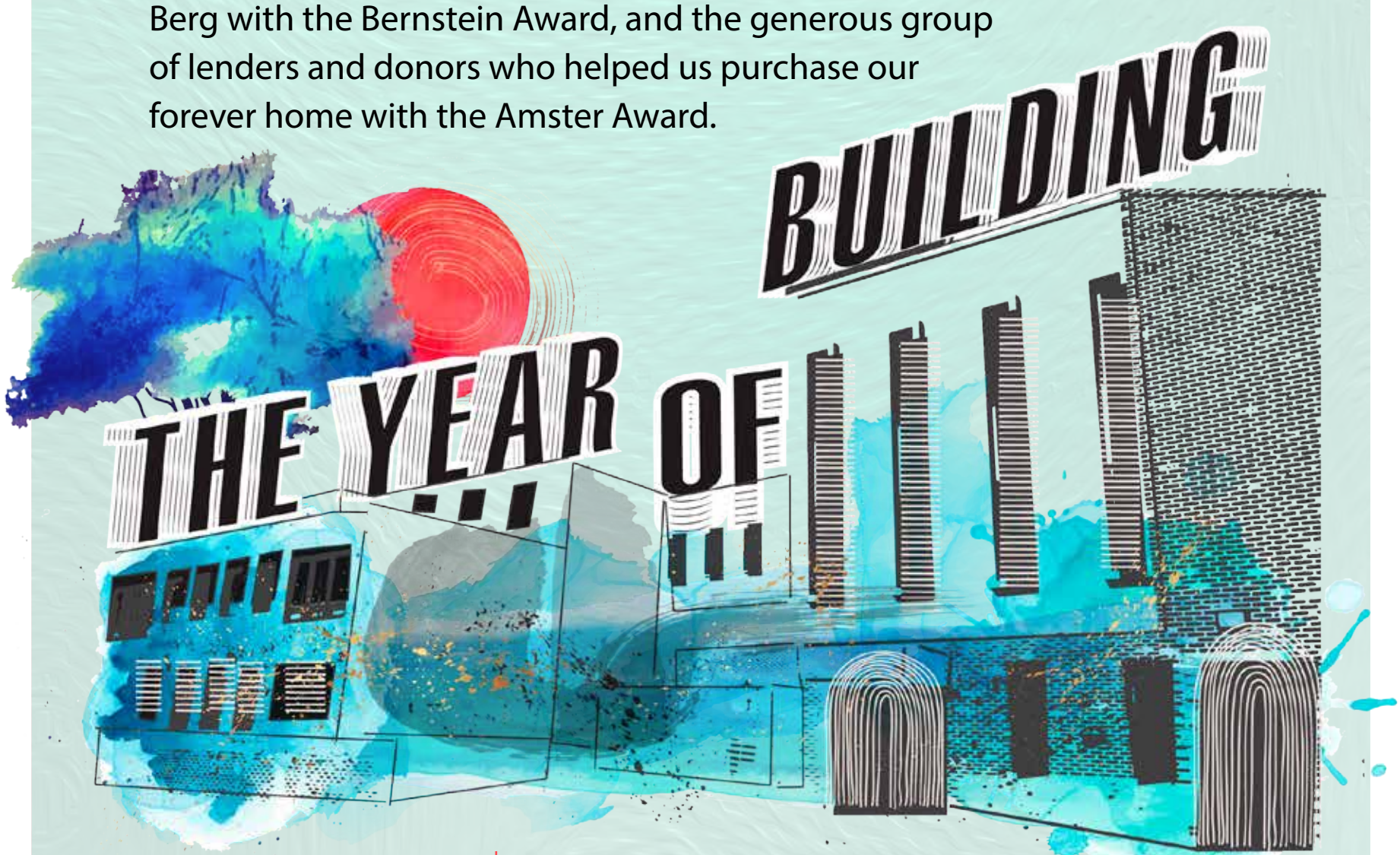
Please save the date!

Join us on **Sunday, June 12, 2022**, as we celebrate the Year of Building. We will honor Mark Berg and Fran Lewy Berg with the Bernstein Award, and the generous group of lenders and donors who helped us purchase our forever home with the Amster Award.



University of Michigan
A. Alfred Taubman
Biomedical Research Building
109 Zina Pitcher Place
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Program: 2:00pm
Strolling Reception: 3:00pm - 5:00pm

Tickets on Sale Now!
For more information, please visit:
https://jfswc.akaraisin.com/mosaic

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Ann Arbor's Landfill Solar Project

Murray Rosenthal, special to the WJN

Next year, electrical power will begin flowing to the power grid from the largest solar power array in the region. The City of Ann Arbor and Detroit Edison (DTE) have entered into an agreement to build a 20 megawatt (MW) solar project on the capped Greenfield landfill site, which is owned by the City of Ann Arbor. This project is called the Ann Arbor & Pittsfield Municipal Landfill Solar Project. The approximately 62,000 solar panel installation will produce enough renewable energy to power the electrical usage for approximately 4,000 homes. The City of Ann Arbor will serve as the project's anchor tenant, meaning it agrees to purchase power not subscribed by other customers. Pittsfield Township will be prioritized as the project's first subscriber and will use the project to reach its 100% renewable energy goal.

The site is located southeast of the corner of Ellsworth and Stone School Roads and is cut in two by a train line. The installation will be partially shielded from view by composting areas and natural areas of vegetation. Some properties will have their view of the project blocked by landscape buffer areas, as well as a 20-foot-deep setback from their property lines.

This is just one of many new solar projects DTE plans to bring online by 2025 to empower communities of Michiganders to go solar together. DTE has also solicited bids for a much larger solar installation near Milan, which will consist of approximately 470,000 panels (150 MW). This project is slated to complete in the next two years.

The latest panel technology takes full advantage of the sun's rays, even on days that are cloudy. New installations use double-sided solar panels; they work even in winter, taking advantage of the reflection from snow to produce power.

The construction of a solar project has very low environmental impact. In addition, rows will remain open that can be used by species traversing the landscape. These installations incorporate pollinator gardens, so the land under and between the arrays can be used to develop new habitats for bees, bats, butterflies, and other pollinators that are important to our food supply. There will be trees planted around these sites to help shield these installations from view. And these trees are environmentally friendly, as they will reduce levels of carbon dioxide. The Ann Arbor & Pittsfield Municipal Landfill Solar Project will also include mitigations against storm water runoff and erosion.

Natural gas provides 33%of Michigan's power, coal provides 27%, and 29% comes from nuclear, according to the federal Energy Information Agency (EIA). Wind produces about 6%, according to the EIA, but the solar industry is an integral part of Michigan's plans to phase out fossil fuels. The fifth fastest growing occupation in the United States is the solar photovoltaic installer, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The federal labor statistics authority estimates that the number of jobs will grow by 52% this decade, with an average yearly pay of $46,470 as of 2021.

This project will be eligible for the federal Energy Investment Tax Credit, which is currently 26% for systems starting construction in 2022. The City will be working with the potential installer to maximize the potential financial benefit from this tax credit.

All DTE Electric customers will have the ability to subscribe to this project. And you can start right now by enrolling in DTE's MI Green Power program. Currently, 15% of your electric power comes from renewable sources. MI Green Power allows you to purchase the remaining 85% of your usage from existing or planned wind/solar energy. If you subscribe your home to take advantage of both solar and wind power, your bill will increase by 2.7¢ per kWh. Current DTE household rates are 15.3¢ per kWh, so your electric bill will increase by 17.6%. Those households that participate in this program will help reduce climate volatility and our shared carbon footprint.

The Ann Arbor & Pittsfield Municipal Landfill Solar Project is an exciting development for meeting our energy needs, using environmentally friendly renewable energy. ■

TBE events in May

Events and services are both in-person and/or virtual. Please see www.templebethemeth.org for full details, locations information, and links.

Families with Young Children Tot Shabbat
First Fridays of each month at 5:45 p.m.

Shabbat Service
Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday Shabbat service
Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Weekday morning blessings
Daily at 9:15 a.m.
Join Rabbi Whinston each morning for a short service of song, poetry, and meditation.

Daily afternoon blessings
Mondays through Thursdays at 3 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut each afternoon for an intimate short service.

Adult B'nai-mitzvah classes
Mondays at 6 p.m.
To join the class, or for more information, contact Cantor Hayut.

Women's Torah study
Mondays at 7:30 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut in an in-depth study and lively discussion of the week's Torah portion. This year, the group will focus on exploring passages that have informed rituals of modern Jewish life.

Twenty-five-minute mindfulness with Jewish spiritual director Linda Greene
Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.
Zoom room opens at 8:15 a.m. for optional check-in. Blessing and intention setting 8:30–8:35 a.m. Meditate 8:35–9 a.m. Start your day centered and connected.

Talmud Tuesdays with Rabbi Alter
Tuesdays at 11 a.m. or 8 p.m.
Both meetings discuss the same material. Join Rabbi Alter to discover the Talmud, the formative collection of stories and discussions that defined the post-Temple Judaism that continues today! Together, explore the foundations of our contemporary Jewish ethics, beliefs, and practices, as well as some tremendous tales about our ancient rabbis! Join anytime! All materials are provided*. (*It is recommended that you read *If All the Seas Were Ink* by Ilana Kurshan, but it's not required or expected.)

Weekly Mahj
Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.
Wednesdays at 1 p.m.

Biblical Book Club with Cantor Hayut
Thursdays at 11 a.m.
Join Cantor Hayut to read and discuss books of Jewish interest a few chapters at a time. This year, the book group will be reading primarily, although not exclusively, works by Israeli authors. For more information or questions, please contact Cantor Hayut.

Back Door Food Pantry
Thursdays, 4 to 7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner
Thursdays at 5 p.m.
Join Claire Weiner for a 40-minute meditation session

Shabbat morning Torah study
Saturdays at 8:50 a.m.
Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston.

Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle
Monday, May 2 at 7 p.m.

Outdoor Spring Campfire Concert —Aly Halpert, Batya Levine, and Arielle Korman
Monday, May 2 at 7 p.m., Free
Join three queer Jewish leaders & musicians whose songs fuel community, movement, & liberation — Batya Levine, Aly Halpert, & Arielle Korman! Offering original music by all three musicians and featuring Aly and Batya's debut albums *Loosen* and *Karov*, this participatory concert is a chance to be together in healing, spirit, and celebration of our collective resilience. Come sing along to three-part harmonies, ground yourself in nigunim (wordless melodies), and dream about what's possible while listening to Arielle's soaring violin playing. However you arrive, Batya, Aly, & Arielle invite you into community, closeness, and song. We are especially happy to welcome Aly home! Born in Ann Arbor and raised at both TBE and Beth Israel Congregation, Aly is a queer white Ashkenazi Jewish young adult musician, writer, activist, and organizer. This free concert will be outdoors at Temple Beth Emeth. More info: www.templebethemeth.org

Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration in Song & Word
Thu, May 5, 7–9 p.m.
Featuring Kol HaLev and Rabbi Josh Weinberg: Vice President of the URJ for Israel and Reform Zionism & Executive Director of ARZA (the Association of Reform Zionists of America)

Elana Arian Community Concert
Saturday, May 14 at 7 p.m.
Free and open to the community.
A composer, multi-instrumentalist, prayer leader, and recording artist, Elana inspires communities across the country with her soulful songwriting and spirit. She has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Tanglewood, and perhaps most memorably, five separate appearances at the (Obama) White House.

Andrew Lapin — Radioactive: How Father Coughlin Brought Antisemitism and Demagoguery to American Mass Media
Thursday, May 19 at 7 p.m.
Father Charles Coughlin, a Catholic priest in Detroit, broadcasting pioneer and celebrity, used his nationwide radio sermons to promote fascism and antisemitic conspiracy theories in the run-up to WWII. He became America's first mass-media demagogue, cultivating a loyal following of violent Nazi gangs, and created a new method for spreading hate to the masses ... that continues to be emulated today. Local journalist Andrew Lapin is the creator and host of *Radioactive*, a podcast about Father Coughlin at Michigan Radio from Tablet Studios and the WNET Group, and the Managing Editor of Local News for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Previously he was the editor-in-chief of the Detroit Jewish News and a film critic for NPR, Vulture, The Economist and other outlets. Lapin — who grew up near Coughlin's church in Royal Oak, MI — will share clips from his podcast and insights from his research into Coughlin's life and methods. ■

Federation to award over $1 million at annual meeting

Rachel Wall, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

For the first time since 2019, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor is proud to be holding its annual meeting in person, on Wednesday, May 25, at 7 p.m. Like most gatherings in the current climate, there will be a virtual option to participate as well.

The annual meeting offers an opportunity to celebrate the past year — and there is much to celebrate. In a year when Federation has asked the greater Ann Arbor Jewish community to give generously — now, more than ever — the generosity of donors has not waned. Last year, Federation's 2021 Annual Community Campaign raised $1.4 million for organizations that enrich Jewish life in Washtenaw County, Israel, and around the world. The total raised for the 2022 Campaign, as well as a breakdown of how those funds are allocated, will be announced at the annual meeting. Federation is excited at the prospect of surpassing last year's total.

Throughout April and May, Federation's two volunteer allocations committees, one dedicated to local and domestic causes and one to Israel and overseas, read proposals and heard presentations from organizations requesting funds for the 2022–23 year. In mid-May, the allocations committees will make their recommendations to the Federation Board of Directors, detailing how funds raised by the 2022 Annual Community Campaign would be best distributed. The Board votes to approve those recommendations at its regularly scheduled meeting on May 16.

This year, the allocations committees are chaired by Murray Rebner (local and domestic) and Hanna Goodstein (Israel and overseas). For more information on the allocations process, to see the full list of committee members, and to view the funds allocated last year from the 2021 Campaign, please visit jewishannarbor.org/about-us/community-impact.

In addition to celebrating the impact of the 2022 Annual Community Campaign, Federation will also be honoring a milestone in planned giving in the greater Ann Arbor area: the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Ann Arbor, which is run by the Federation, has reached $10 million in assets. This significant accomplishment demonstrates the commitment of local community members to not only support Jewish life as it happens now, but to invest in a sustainable future for the community. The growth of the Foundation is due in part to the success of the LIFE & LEGACY® program, which will complete its second year in Washtenaw County at the end of August 2022. LIFE & LEGACY is a collaboration between the national Harold Grinspoon Foundation, the Federation, and 10 other local Jewish organization, working to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the community for future generations.

The financial impact of the Federation would not be possible without those volunteers who give their valuable time to enrich the community. At the annual meeting, the community will honor those volunteers, especially the board of directors. At this year's meeting, we will thank those board members whose terms are ending: Babette Levy Daskin, Mike Davidoff, Hanna Goodstein, and Eiran Warner. The Meeting is also the time to welcome incoming members Debra Chopp, Julie Grand, Marty Shichtman, and Annie Wolock. Community members present at the meeting will vote to elect the new members.

In addition, Federation will recognize the service of outgoing President Randy Milgrom, who will remain on the board as immediate past president, and welcome incoming president Jessica 'Decky' Alexander, current vice president, into her new role.

Most of all, the annual meeting is an opportunity to thank all the generous donors to the 2022 Annual Community Campaign for their dedication to supporting Jewish life locally and around the world. If you have not yet made a gift or pledge to the 2022 Annual Community Campaign, there is still time before the Board votes to approve the recommendations of the allocations committees on May 16. Please visit JewishAnnArbor.org to make your contribution today, or contact Federation's Communications and Development Manager Rachel Wall at rachel@jewishannarbor.org or (734) 773-3533.

Federation invites the entire community to join the Annual Meeting. To register, visit JewishAnnArbor.org. ■

Beth Israel events in May

Yom HaZikaron Ceremony
Tuesday, May 3, 7 p.m.
A reflective and respectful service of poetry, testimony, and prayer remembering those who have fallen in Israel's struggle for survival. Hybrid format (i.e. both in person and streaming). Zoom links are available on the Beth Israel website (www.bethisrael-aa.org).

Serenity Shabbat
Saturday, May 20, 6 p.m.
Serenity Shabbat, hosted by various congregations, focuses on addiction awareness and the wisdom of Jewish tradition as it relates to the spiritual practice of recovery. Everyone is welcome, including members of the recovery community, friends and family who have been affected by a loved one's addiction, and anyone interested in this unique spiritual experience.

Theology Book Club — Online
Wednesdays at 8 p.m.
Beth Israel Congregation's Theology Book Club welcomes you to join them to read together and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. The books are in English. Contact Paul Shifrin at (248) 514-7276 for more information.

In Person and Online Services

Everyone is welcome to join Beth Israel for services, classes, and events. Services are being held in person and virtually. Below is a list of the links to participate virtually in services at Beth Israel. Beth Israel is now live streaming services on the Beth Israel YouTube channel (Beth Israel Congregation AA MI). All links will also be available on the Beth Israel homepage (www.bethisrael-aa.org). Please note that passwords are used. Contact the office to get the passwords at office@bethisrael-aa.org.

Evening Minyan — virtual only
Sunday–Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Friday Evening Services — in person and virtual
Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Services — In person and virtual
Saturday at 9:30 a.m. ■

JFS thanks community volunteers

By Jacob Singer, Jewish Family Service

The month of April is National Volunteer Month, and Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County (JFS) is celebrating its Volunteer Appreciation Week from April 25–29. JFS is thrilled to recognize the outstanding hard work of its volunteers and the overwhelming positive impact that volunteerism has on the local community. JFS extends its sincerest gratitude to the many Washtenaw County-based volunteers who have gone out of their way in these challenging times to give their time and resources to support the work of the agency during this past year. As we continue to navigate the frequent changes necessary to provide social services in a pandemic, the involvement of volunteers is critical. JFS has been able to expand services, in both quality and quantity, over the last year because of the superior dedication of these amazing community members. In just the last year alone, hundreds of new volunteers joined the JFS family.

Volunteers have assisted across domains and services offered by JFS. In JFS Nutrition Services, volunteers deliver groceries for the JFS Specialty Food Pantry, unpack boxes from food providers, and sort the contents properly into delivery parcels. Volunteers at JFS also enhanced community connections by placing phone reassurance calls to older adults on the Wise Comfort Line, who for many reasons may feel especially isolated during these times. Volunteers taught English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, tutored and mentored immigrant and refugee youth, and otherwise assisted in the many laborious tasks necessary to resettle refugees into our community.

The compassion for others demonstrated by JFS volunteers has created abundant hope and joy in our ever-changing and hard-to-navigate new normal. Washtenaw County, much like the rest of the world, has been disrupted by anxiety, loss, and grief, but thanks to our amazing volunteers, community members were offered respite from such dark feelings. We, the staff and Board of Directors of Jewish Family Services, remain grateful for our amazing volunteers who continue to stand with JFS and the community through these adjustments in our lives. We know that no matter what lies ahead, we can rely on our cherished volunteers to create community and inspire change. If you would like to get involved, please visit www.jfsannarbor.org/volunteer or call (734) 769-0209. ■

Federation announces two new funding opportunities to foster innovation and collaboration

By Rachel Wall, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor is pleased to announce the availability of two funds that aim to foster cross-communal collaboration and innovation in the greater Ann Arbor Jewish community: the Community Engagement Fund (CEF) and the Zelma Weisfeld Fund for Culture & Education.

The Community Engagement Fund was originally established with money from Federation's 2019 Annual Community Campaign, to encourage organizations and individuals to work collaboratively on new, innovative initiatives. Federation intends to continue adding to this fund on an annual basis. With a critical baseline amount amassed, Federation is now ready to begin rolling out the grant application process to the community.

There are very few stipulations for the type of programming the CEF can support. A volunteer committee of the Federation identified guiding principles for funding decisions as: cross-communal collaboration, creativity and innovation, joy and connectivity. Federation sees this fund as an opportunity to incentivize creation of programming and initiatives that focus on bringing the community together, rather than operating in differentiated "silos" that could otherwise compete with one another.

While the CEF is funded entirely by the Federation, the Zelma Weisfeld Fund for Culture & Education was established by the estate of Ms. Weisfeld specifically to support Jewish cultural or educational programming. Beyond the slightly more narrow focus, the goals of this fund echo those of the CEF in its desire for collaboration and innovation.

"We're delighted to be able to make these funds available to the community," said Jewish Federation Executive Director Eileen Freed. "This is an excellent opportunity to encourage our local organizations and congregations to work together for the benefit of the community and to provide support for great ideas that add to our communal vibrancy."

There will be two fund application opportunities each year for the CEF, and one for the Zelma Weisfeld Fund. The exact timing of the funding cycles will be determined in the coming month.

For both funds, grants of up to $5,000 will be available to individuals or organizations in the Jewish community. Applications must be submitted by a partnership of three or more collaborators. Preference will be given to new ideas and one-time programs, although ongoing collaborative programs may also be considered.

Specifics about how and when to apply for these funds will be announced soon. For more information or to inquire, contact Eileen Freed, eileenfreed@jewishannarbor.org or 734-773-3537. ■

Grants for summer Jewish summer camp

Hilary Greenberg, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor is pleased to announce that they are now in partnership with the Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) as a One Happy Camper program provider. FJC has partnered with over 100 North American federations, foundations, camp movements, and camps, as well as the Jim Joseph Foundation (JWest), and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (PJ Goes to Camp) to provide over 100,000 grants totaling $100 million. One Happy Camper grant recipients — just like all Jewish campers — will experience a memorable summer infused with Jewish education, awareness, and identity.

What is One Happy Camper?

One Happy Camper is a program of the Foundation for Jewish Camp. In partnership with local Jewish communities and Jewish overnight camps across North America, One Happy Camper provides need-blind grants of up to $1,000 to families with children attending nonprofit, mission-driven Jewish overnight camp for the first time.

Why Jewish overnight camp?

At Jewish overnight camp, kids discover who they are and who they want to become while having the time of their lives. They try out new things and find the best versions of themselves. Basketball and soccer? Of course! Sailing and waterskiing? Yup. Music and drama and art? You bet! Specialty programs in science or entrepreneurship or culinary arts? They've got those, too. At Jewish camp, kids can do it all while making lifelong friends and building important life skills. They develop independence, self-confidence, and leadership. They learn determination and problem solving, and at the end of the day, they get to sing songs and toast marshmallows. "Our kids love going to Camp Young Judaea Midwest. They talk about it at home pretty much every day, from when we pick them up in August until they go back to camp the next July. It's a place where they've grown and where they've built many of their most important friendships. It's one of their favorite places and we're delighted that they feel so positively about someplace that is deeply Jewish," say Eve and Richard Primus.

Summer overnight camp is about so much more than campfires and color war. It's a chance for kids to explore who they are and who they want to become. At Jewish camp, *ruach* (spirit) is part of every activity — from dancing to hitting a home run — allowing campers to explore their connection to the Jewish community while having the summer of their lives. There is a camp out there that matches your child's interests. With over 155 camps to choose from, the *Find a Camp* tool makes it easy to discover camps you and your kids will love, based on information such as where you live, your child's grade, and the type of activities your child is looking for. Visit OneHappyCamper.org/FindaCamp to get started!

Eligibility and How to Apply

If your child is attending Jewish overnight camp for the first time for a minimum of 12 days, they could be eligible for a $700–$1,000 grant. Children must identify as Jewish and not attend Jewish day school. To apply for a One Happy Camper grant for your child's first overnight camp experience, visit OneHappyCamper.org/applynow. ■

Camp Tavor hires new executive director

Sarah Okin, special to the WJN

Habonim Dror Camp Tavor is thrilled to announce its new executive director: Danya Shapiro. Danya is a longtime Jewish professional with significant experience in the nonprofit world. She served as treasurer of Habonim Dror North America's national leadership team in New York City, worked for the Jewish Learning Venture (based in Melrose Park, Pennsylvania), and, most recently, Danya led programming for jHUB (based in Cleveland, Ohio). Danya was born in Israel (a true sabra!), is a Tavor alumna (camper and staff), and will spend the off-season working from Cleveland.

In her new role as executive director of Camp Tavor, Danya will be responsible for a range of activities, including budgeting, financial management, board, committee and volunteer management, camper recruitment and retention, regional and annual meetings, management of the year-round bonimot tzedek program, new program development, and alliance building with other organizations.

Danya shared that she is "excited and honored" to join Camp Tavor in this capacity. "Tavor has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember, and I am thrilled to be in a position to provide strategic and tactical leadership to support the organization into the future."

Camp Tavor provides a unique experience in Jewish camping: empowering young people to dream of and build a more just and peaceful world. Camp Tavor's mission is to provide an inclusive community where kids have fun being themselves while developing a strong sense of social and environmental responsibility, a caring connection with Israel, and a positive personal Jewish identity. Camp Tavor is committed to cultivating youth leadership and empowerment through our longstanding partnership with the worldwide Habonim Dror Youth Movement, developing a connection with Israel, and supporting year-round, youth-led programming in local communities.

Camp Tavor provides programming of various lengths from one week to five weeks for campers entering second through 12th grades. Families from Washtenaw County may also be eligible for up to $2500 off their first summer session in 2022 with a guaranteed amount up to $1500 toward summer 2023 through our Small Communities Incentive and One Happy Camper Grant. For more information on Camp Tavor, programming dates, and rates, please visit www.camptavor.org or contact us at 269-215-1399 or info@camptavor.org. ■

ELANA ARIAN

A LEADING VOICE IN CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MUSIC

5/13: Friday Night Service @ 7:30 p.m.
In Person at Temple Beth Emeth and Online
Open to the community!

5/14: Free Community Concert @ 7 p.m.
In Person at Temple Beth Emeth and Online

Explore Elana's Music: https://elanaarian.com/recording
A composer, multi-instrumentalist, prayer leader, and recording artist, Elana inspires communities across the country with her soulful songwriting and spirit. She has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Tanglewood, and perhaps most memorably, five separate appearances at the (Obama) White House.

Temple Beth Emeth | 2309 Packard St., Ann Arbor
www.templebethemeth.org

A unique overnight summer camp experience for campers entering 2nd - 12th grades! 1-week to 5-week long sessions.

Have fun in the sun while making friends that will last a lifetime... working together to build community, Jewish identity, and a caring connection to Israel.

Washtenaw County Families are eligible to save up to $2500 off tuition this summer and guaranteed up to $1500 for Summer 2023!
Email info@camptavor.org to learn more!

No longer wandering: The EMU Center for Jewish Studies @ 10

Martin Shichtman, EMU Center for Jewish Studies

On Tuesday, May 24, at 6 p.m., the Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies will celebrate its 10-year anniversary with an evening of storytelling, live music with Ari Axelrod, and delicious food. Senator Carl Levin (z"l) visited the Eastern Michigan campus February 23, 2012, to formally introduce the university's exciting new program in Jewish Studies. Senator Levin spoke passionately about the joys and difficulties of growing up Jewish in Michigan. Mostly, however, he addressed why he was so delighted that EMU, a school of opportunity that has, for generations, afforded a dynamic educational environment for working-class, first-generation college students, would now be offering a venue to showcase the importance of Judaism. The little program that Senator Levin highlighted ten years ago has now grown into the Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies.

EMU's Center for Jewish Studies has become a space for community engagement where all of Southeast Michigan's numerous ethnic communities can learn more about Jews and Judaism. In its ten years, the EMU CJS has sponsored a wildly successful lecture/performance series, responsible for bringing to Ypsilanti academics such as Jonathan Sarna, Michael Berenbaum, Guy Stern, and Pamela Nadell; musicians David Broza, Mira Awad, Galeet Dardashti and Divahn, and Nefesh Mountain; culinary historians Michael Twitty, Liz Alpern, and Jeffrey Yoskowitz; artists Lisa Kron, Jason Francisco, and Aaron Wolfe; activists like Aaron Lansky, Tamar Manasseh, Capers Funnye, and David Hirsch; and political figures Jim Gerstein and Elissa Slotkin. The Center has established strong and vital collaborations between the university and its neighboring communities, working with the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, the Ann Arbor JCC, the AJC, Beth Israel Congregation, Temple Beth Emeth, Temple Israel, Temple Adat Shalom, the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, the Holocaust Memorial Center, and Hillel. It has received grants and support from the Covenant Foundation, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, the Academic Engagement Network, Hillel, the Association for Jewish Studies, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the UM Center for Middle East and North African Studies, and the Frankel Center.

But most of all, Eastern's CJS has provided opportunities for college students to engage deeply with a culture and history that may not be their own; to meet members of the local Jewish community, learn from them, and call them friends; to expand their thinking about what it means to be an ethical person in the 21st century by imagining diverse points of view; and to embrace people unlike themselves and realize that our differences pale in comparison with our shared humanity. The Center's first minor, Samantha Isselbacher, graduated Summa Cum Laude in 2014, and is now a veterinarian. Many others have followed, with great success. The Center's innovative domestic travel program has taken students — some who had never been on an airplane — to New York to study "Jewish Identity and American Theater," and to New York, Philadelphia, and Washington for "Becoming Jewish in America." Study abroad initiatives have provided support for students to study the Holocaust in Germany and Poland and consider "Imagining the Holy Land" in Israel. The EMU CJS is the leading institution in the Michigan Consortium for Israel Studies, that will bring students from seven Michigan institutions of higher education to Tel Aviv for a month of classes.

It has been an absolutely exhilarating 10 years for Jewish Studies at EMU, and we hope you can join us to celebrate our first decade and look ahead to a bright future. Tickets are available for the fabulous 10 Year Anniversary gala at emich.edu/cjs10 or 734-487-5634. . ■

An evening with Itzhak Perlman

The reigning virtuoso of the violin, Itzhak Perlman, comes to Wharton Center for Performing Arts in East Lansing on Tuesday, May 3, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are on sale at the Wharton Center Ticket Office, online at whartoncenter.com, or by calling 517.432.2000 or 1.800.WHARTON.

Itzhak Perlman enjoys superstar status rarely afforded a classical musician. One of the world's most respected violinists and music educators, Itzhak Perlman has reached new audiences throughout his career, from *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1958, to *Sesame Street* in the 1980s, to 2018's duet with jazz pianist Jon Batiste on *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert. Beloved for his charm, humanity, and talent, Perlman is treasured around the world, not only for his remarkable artistry, but for the irrepressible joy he finds in making music. In this multimedia program, joined by master pianist and longtime collaborator Rohan De Silva, he treats the Wharton Center audience to a unique and intimate window on his life: rarely-seen home movies, photos, and personal anecdotes from more than a half-century of music-making.

Perlman has received 16 Grammy Awards, four Emmy Awards, a Kennedy Center Honor, a Presidential Medal of Freedom, a Grammy® Lifetime Achievement Award, and a Genesis Prize. . ■

Movies that matter: AA Jewish film fest 2022

Judith Endelman and Noemi Herzig, JCC Film Festival Committee

Exile from Nazi Germany ... gang fights in Berlin ... love in Jerusalem. Films from Germany, Israel, France, Great Britain, the United States. Over the past four months, this year's Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival committee watched, loved, hated, and debated nearly 200 films (70 feature-length and 120 short films) to put together a diverse selection of 18 feature-length films and three programs of shorts.

Documentaries, comedies, musicals, family dramas, biographies, serious, light, disturbing, animated. This year's film festival has something for everyone. Most films were released during the pandemic in 2020–2021.

Last year we watched all of the films from our couches. This year's festival will include three in-person events. All but one of the films will also be available through streaming. Another big improvement from last year: we will have our own independent platform, hosted by Eventive, that will eliminate the deep frustration we experienced last year trying to access the films.

The 21st Annual Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival will offer 18 feature films and three short film selections, beginning June 19 and continuing through July 15. There are several ways to enjoy this year's Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival. Sponsors will have access to all films, discussions, and a special sponsor event with brunch. Sponsorships are available beginning at $180 per person; an all-festival pass can be purchased for $150 that will provide access to all the films. New this year, we are offering "Pick 10," a Festival Pass to view 10 films for $80, and "Pick 5," a festival pass to view five films for $50. Individual tickets will be available for $12 each.

Films will be released in blocks of five. Each block will be available for streaming for five days. Additional information will be forthcoming. For the in-person events we will follow the COVID-19 guidelines of the venues, the Rackham Amphitheater and the State Theater.

The Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival is supported by generous donations from the community. Those wishing to continue the success of the festival are encouraged to visit the "Become a Sponsor" page on the festival's website to find out more about these opportunities. More about the film festival can be found at film.jccannarbor.org. For additional information, contact Director of Jewish Cultural Arts and Education, Noemi Herzig, at noemiherzig@jccannarbor.org. . ■

JCC annual golf outing is back

Ariella Monson, Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor

Join us for our 7th annual "Golf Outing Fore the Kids" on Monday August 8 at Polo Fields Ann Arbor, as we raise scholarship funds for the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor's Early Childhood Center and Camp Raanana programs. This is the first year we will have an honoree at our golf event and are thrilled to be able to honor Eileen Freed, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, for the tremendous dedication and leadership she brings to the Ann Arbor Jewish community and beyond.

Eileen has lived in Ann Arbor since 1998 and has served as the Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor since 2017. During an earlier tenure at Federation from 2005–2013, Eileen served in several roles including Director of Israel/Overseas & Community Relations. From 2003–2013, Eileen was Special Projects & Communications Manager at Zionism Victoria in Melbourne, Australia, where she produced community-wide Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut events. Eileen has served on the boards of several local Jewish communal organizations including Federation, Hebrew Day School, and Beth Israel Congregation. Prior to her arrival in Ann Arbor, she was founding president of the Lerner Jewish Community Day School of Durham/Chapel Hill. Eileen earned her BA at the University of Texas at Austin and her MBA at the University of Houston. She and her husband Gary are proud parents of three grown children, Ben, Michele, and Ariel.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Eileen has provided tremendous leadership in helping our community organizations navigate the challenges brought on by the pandemic. Under Eileen's guidance, Federation has provided financial resources, constructed several committees, created task forces to provide much-needed collaboration, and provided platforms to discuss key strategic issues. Eileen has worked tirelessly to get the Washtenaw Jewish Community to survive and thrive.

The funds raised from the annual golf outing provide scholarship funds for our youth programs. The JCC's Early Childhood Center is one of the top providers in the area, providing safe, fun, caring, and educational programs for children aged eight weeks to prekindergarten in our community. Camp Raanana, our popular summer day camp for prekindergarten to high school aged children, allows campers to experience a fun, safe, and enriching summer. Without the support from community members, we would not be able to offer scholarships to our participants.

We hope the community will participate and support our 2022 JCC Annual Golf Outing. Join us as a golfer or a supporter of the event. Various sponsorship opportunities are available to show your support of the JCC's youth programming and to honor Eileen Freed. Donations and registrations can be made online at www.jccannarbor.org, by calling 734.971.0990, or by reaching out to Ariella Monson, Director of Development and Operations, ariellamonson@jccannarbor.org, . ■

2022 Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival

In-Person Opening Event at the State Theater, Sunday, June 19, 2 and 5 p.m.

***Fiddler's Journey To The Big Screen* (2022, Documentary/The Arts, English, 88 min)**

Jeff Goldblum narrates this documentary about director Norman Jewison's *Fiddler on the Roof*, tracing the story behind his quest to recreate the lost world of Jewish life in Tsarist Russia and reenvision the beloved stage hit as a wide-screen epic while confronting a myriad of creative decisions. The documentary integrates behind-the-scenes footage and interviews with Jewison, Topol, composer John Williams, production designer Robert F. Boyle, film critic Kenneth Turan, lyricist Sheldon Harnick, and actresses who played Tevye's daughters.

Week one of virtual streaming

Sunday, June 19, 7 p.m., thru Friday, June 24, 7 p.m.

Muranow (2020/2021, Documentary/History/Holocaust, Hebrew, Polish, English w/ subtitles, 70 min)
The Muranow neighborhood in Warsaw was once a flourishing and important center of Jewish life. During World War II the neighborhood was turned into the Warsaw Ghetto. When the war ended, the neighborhood was rebuilt with the rubble of its own destruction. Today, thousands of Poles live in the green and spacious Muranow, yet its dark past keeps haunting it. Polish residents claim that Jewish ghosts live in the neighborhood. At night they shake off the dust and ashes that cover them, and wander the streets they once lived in. Other residents think the ghosts are a metaphor for the life, culture, and memories of the Jewish people buried beneath the ground.

Wet Dog (2020, Drama/Jewish/Cultural Identity/Coming of Age/Interfaith, German w/ subtitles, 103 min)
Upon moving to a Berlin neighborhood rife with antisemitism, 16-year-old Iranian Jew Soheil hides his identity and joins a gang, where he rises in the ranks, but always with the constant threat of being found out. Damir Lukacevic's thought-provoking film considers how the need to find one's place can lead to self-denial and toxic reinvention.

Kiss Me Kosher (2019, Comedy/Romance/Israel/LGBTQ, Hebrew, Arabic, German, English w/ subtitles, 105 min)
Sparks fly when two families from wildly different cultural backgrounds collide to plan a same-sex wedding in this screwball romantic comedy that crosses all borders.

The Lost Film of Nuremberg (2021, Documentary/Holocaust/Military War, French, English w/ subtitles, 52 min)
Adapted from a monograph by Sandra Schulberg, *The Lost Film of Nuremberg* retraces the hunt by brothers Budd and Stuart Schulberg for film evidence that could convict the Nazis at the Nuremberg Trial. Seventy-five years later, Jean-Christophe Klotz uncovers never-before-seen footage and interviews key figures to unravel why the resulting film about the trial was intentionally buried by the U.S. government.

Short film selection I

Special in-person sponsor event at Rackham, June 26, 10:30 a.m.

Special in-person sponsor event with viewing of film, brunch, program with cinematographer and film director Peter Stein, and art exhibit at the Rackham Amphitheatre and Assembly Hall, Sunday, June 26, 10:30 a.m.
Out of Exile: The Photography of Fred Stein (2021, Documentary/Biography/The Arts/Holocaust, English, 86 min).
This award-winning film is the tale of a man caught up in one of history's darkest moments. The Nazi menace thrust Fred Stein into a life of exile: in 1930s Paris; across the war-torn French countryside; and in 1940s New York. Always full of belief in the human spirit, his answer was to create thousands of brilliant photographs, an art that transcends bigotry.

Week two of virtual streaming

Sunday, June 26, 7 p.m., thru Friday, July 1, 7 p.m.

Out Of Exile: The Photography of Fred Stein (2021, Documentary/Biography/The Arts/Holocaust, English, 86 min). See description above.

Rose (2021, Drama/Family/International Jewish Cultures, French w/ subtitles, 102 min)
Suddenly widowed at 78, family matriarch Rose learns to pursue her desires, rejecting the societal pressure to "act her age" and fade into benign oblivion. A career-crowning turn from screen legend Françoise Fabian (one-time star of *My Night at Maud's*) highlights this life-affirming reminder that it's never too late to seek fulfillment. This dramedy is graced by wonderful dollops of Yiddishkeit and Sephardic culture.

Berenshtein (2021, Military/War Drama/Biography, Russian, German, Polish, Ukrainian w/ subtitles, 105 min)
Few of Leonid Berenshtein's neighbors in Israel in 2019 imagined that the elderly man who lived in an old, modest house was the last living commander of a courageous WWII partisan battalion. This striking film revisits his past, as we learn about how he helped locate the secret facility where the Nazis developed their last hope for victory over the Allies … the V2 missile. This docudrama is based on a true story.

Let It Be Morning (2021, Drama/Dark Comedy/Israel/Family, Hebrew, Arabic w/ subtitles, 101 min)
Sami lives in Jerusalem with his wife and kid. An invitation to his brother's wedding forces him to return to the Arabic village where he grew up. After the wedding, with no explanation, the village is put under lockdown by Israeli soldiers. Chaos rises overnight among those stuck within the walls. Cut off from the outside world, trapped in an unexpected situation, Sami watches as everything falls apart.

Short Film Selection II

Week three of virtual streaming

Sunday, July 3, 7 p.m., thru Friday, July 8, 7 p.m.

The Levy's of Monticello (2021, Documentary/History, English, 70 min)
When Thomas Jefferson died in 1826, he left behind a mountain of personal debt, forcing his heirs to sell his beloved Monticello home. This documentary reveals how the Levy family owned and carefully preserved Monticello for nearly a century. It's a story that intersects with the rise of antisemitism in America.

Plan A (2021, Drama/History/Holocaust, German w/ subtitles, 109 min)
Set in Germany in 1945, this thriller's central character is Max (August Diehl from *Inglorious Basterds*) who, along with other Jewish survivors, develops a plan to take revenge against the Nazis. Their goal is to poison the water system in Germany. Based on real life conspirators, the filmmakers dare to pose the question: "What is your interpretation of revenge: killing back, or celebrating life and building something new?"

Dead Sea Guardians (2021, Documentary/Mideast Conflict/Political/Israel/Family, Hebrew w/ subtitles, 75 min)
Located at the lowest point on Earth, the Dead Sea is a unique salt lake, known for its exceptional geographical and biological value. Due to poor water management, it is drying up, causing widespread damage, including huge sinkholes, abandoned beaches and collapsing roads. To draw the world's attention to the Sea's plight, a Jordanian, an Israeli, and a Palestinian swim across it in a heroic, unprecedented, and extremely dangerous act.

A Kaddish for Bernie Madoff (2021, Documentary/Musical, English, 75 min)
Set on Wall Street in 2008, *A Kaddish for Bernie Madoff* offers a singular perspective on devastating financial fraud. Musician/poet Alicia Jo Rabins plays herself in New York's financial district, obsessing over Madoff and the capitalist system that enabled him, in this head-spinning hybrid of fantasy, music, and personal memoir.

Short Film Selection III

In Person Event at Rackham, Sunday, July 10, 2 p.m

Special in-person film viewing followed by a panel discussion with director Justin Kron and desserts at the Rackham Amphitheatre and Assembly Hall, Sunday, July 10, 2 p.m.
Hope in the Holy Land (2021, Documentary/Israel/Interfaith/Mideast Conflict, English, 111 min). Todd Morehead, an American Christian with a deep love for Israel, sets off on a journey across the Holy Land to confront his indifference toward the Palestinians and to search for the deeper truths behind one of the most perplexing and polarizing conflicts in the world. Along the way, he discovers the painful struggles of Jews, Muslims, and Christians on both sides of the conflict. The result is an enlightening journey that exposes viewers to perspectives rarely seen in the media, and a challenge to a man's heart to love his enemy.

Week four of virtual streaming

Sunday, July 10, 7 p.m., thru Friday, July 15, 7 p.m.

Hope In the Holy Land (2021, Documentary/Israel/Interfaith/Mideast Conflict, English, 111 min). See description above.

African Exodus (2021, Documentary/Israel/Human Rights/Social Issues, English, 71min)
Seeking safety and asylum, some 60,000 Africans have fled to Israel over the past decade. The country, founded as a haven for persecuted Jews in the aftermath of the Holocaust, has no policy, infrastructure, or political will to handle this wave of migrants. *African Exodus*, a documentary film, explores Israel's other refugee crisis.

The Tiger Within (2020, Drama/Coming of Age/Holocaust, English, 98min)
The late Edward Asner demonstrates his versatility yet again in one of his final roles: Samuel, a Holocaust survivor who develops an unlikely friendship with a troubled teenage runaway who sports a swastika on her jacket. Rafal Zielinski's *The Tiger Within* defies predictability with the genuinely surprising chemistry between its sublime leads, over 75 years apart in age.

Back In Berlin (2021, Documentary/Holocaust, English, 58min)
Shortly after his father dies, Bobby returns to England and finds an old suitcase revealing the truth his father hid, about his family who perished in the Holocaust. He invites Manuel, his childhood friend with a German background, to translate the documents. Manuel shares that he too discovered a family secret: his great-uncle is the infamous Nazi director Veit Harlan, who directed *Jew Süss,* the most notorious anti-Semitic propaganda film in history. Together they embark on a journey to Berlin that puts their friendship to the test.

The Fourth Window — Amos Oz (2021, Documentary/Biography, The Arts, Israel, Hebrew w/subtitles, 86min)
Behind the international success of Amos Oz, whose novels have been translated into 45 languages, lurks a double tragedy. When he was 12, his mother committed suicide; before his own death, his daughter accused him of being physically and mentally violent. A series of conversations with the major people in his life provide us with Amos Oz's last story. ■

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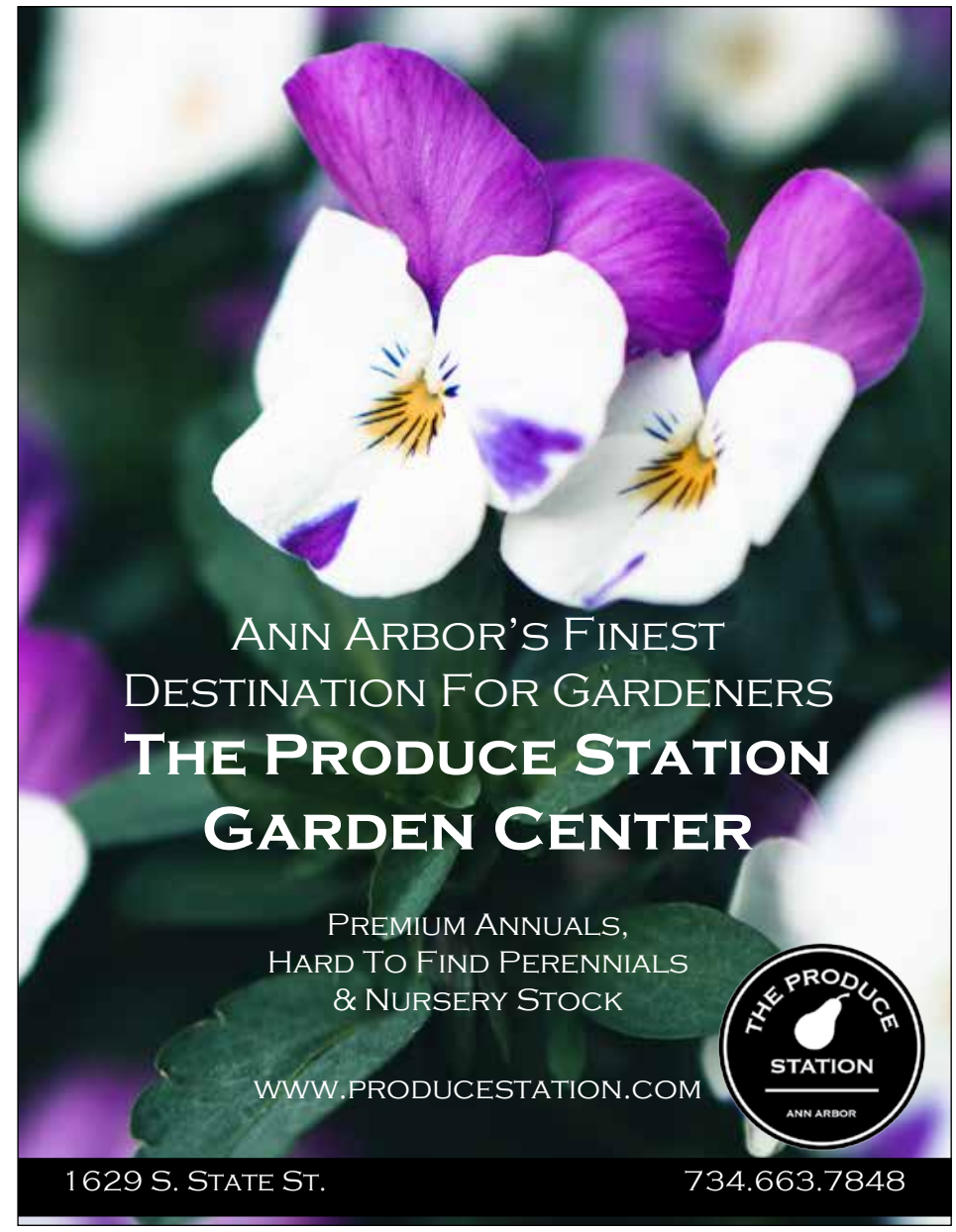

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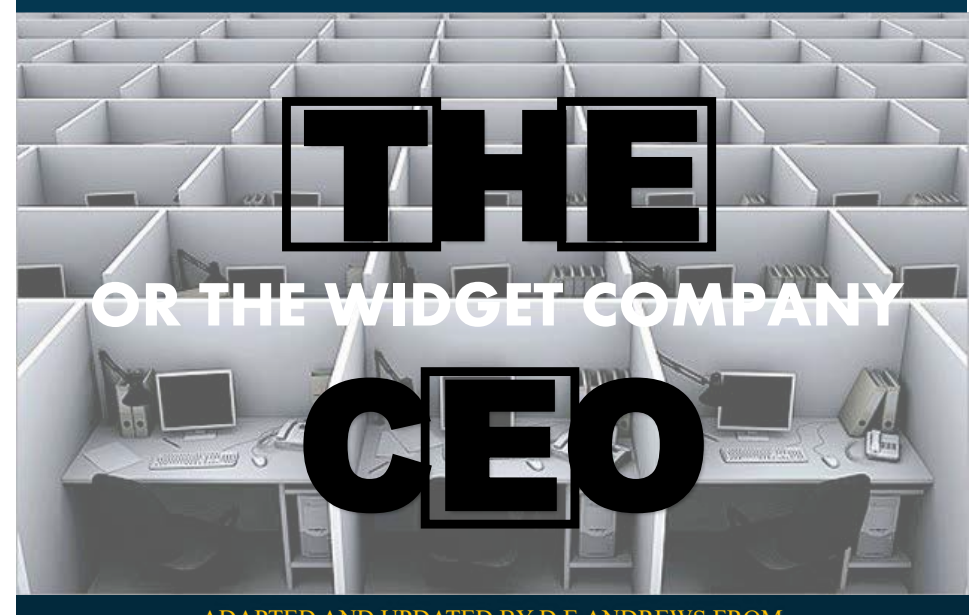

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Matzah in hand, Jews led interfaith protesters to demand Chase Bank 'move their dough' from fossil fuels

On April 20, Jewish leaders from Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action, Jewish Youth Climate Movement, The Shalom Center, MI Interfaith Power and Light, and more gathered in front of the Ann Arbor office of Chase Bank to demand that JPMorgan Chase take immediate action to end their investments in polluting fossil fuels. Emphasizing the urgency of the moment and lifting up the symbols of Passover, community leaders proclaimed the plagues that fossil fuel Pharaohs – coal, oil and gas companies – have inflicted on us.

"Amidst an accelerating climate crisis, it is Chase Bank's responsibility not only to end their investments in Russian oil and gas projects that bankroll Putin's war in Ukraine, but in all fossil fuel projects," said Tali Deaner.

Climate change is an issue American Jews care about profoundly. According to a recent survey by the Jewish Electorate Institute, climate change is the top issue for Jewish voters across the country.

Jews are commanded to protect the vulnerable, (shomer ger yatom v'almanah). The climate crisis is not only an existential threat, it is also a moral crisis. Millions of Black, Brown, Indigenous, and poor people in the United States experience environmental racism every day, forced to breathe polluted air and drink poisoned water caused by fossil fuel and other noxious industries in economically distressed neighborhoods. ■

Dreaming up A2J

Earlier this year, Clare Kinberg, Rabbi Josh Whinston and Rachel Levy sent out an open invitation to a March 20 afternoon meeting, "Dreaming up A2J." The meeting, led by community organizer Chuck Warpehoski, was designed to help inspire new, out-of-the box-thinking about the future of the Ann Arbor Jewish community.

The organizers hoped that affiliated and unaffiliated Jews from every stripe and movement would show up to discuss our collective future and they, intentionally, did not host the conversation as institutional leaders, but as Jews gathering together to discuss the state of our Jewish community. The 80 people who gathered (40 on Zoom, 40 in the room) said they wanted a more united, less siloed, better integrated Jewish community.

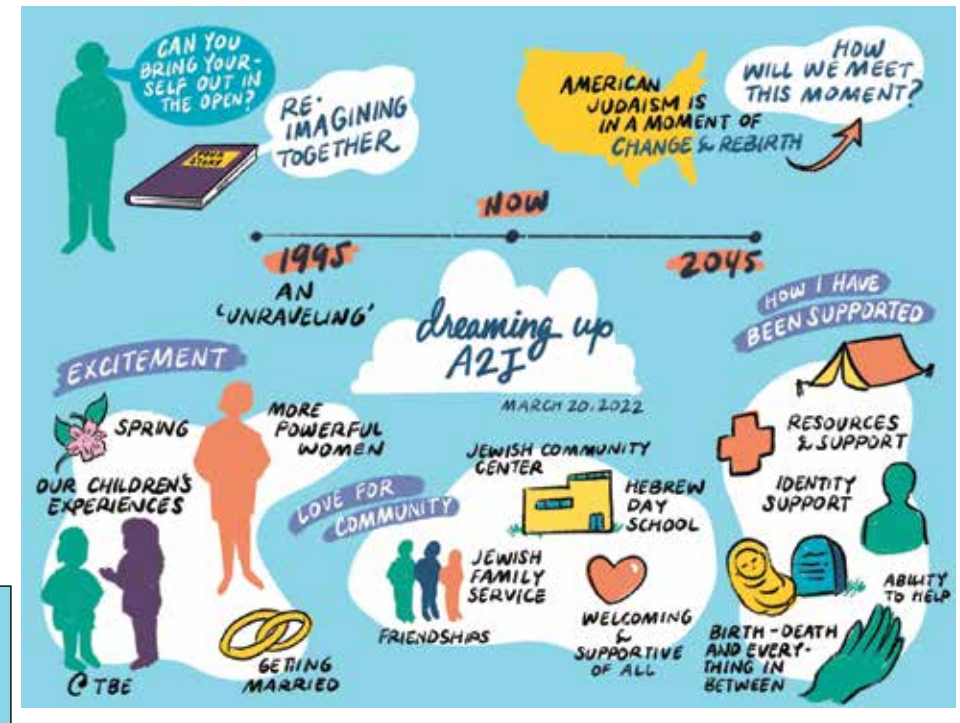
"Modern Jewish community today requires breaking down silos and finding ways to interact more closer and more often. This was a good start towards that goal." Andrew Bank, Jewish community member

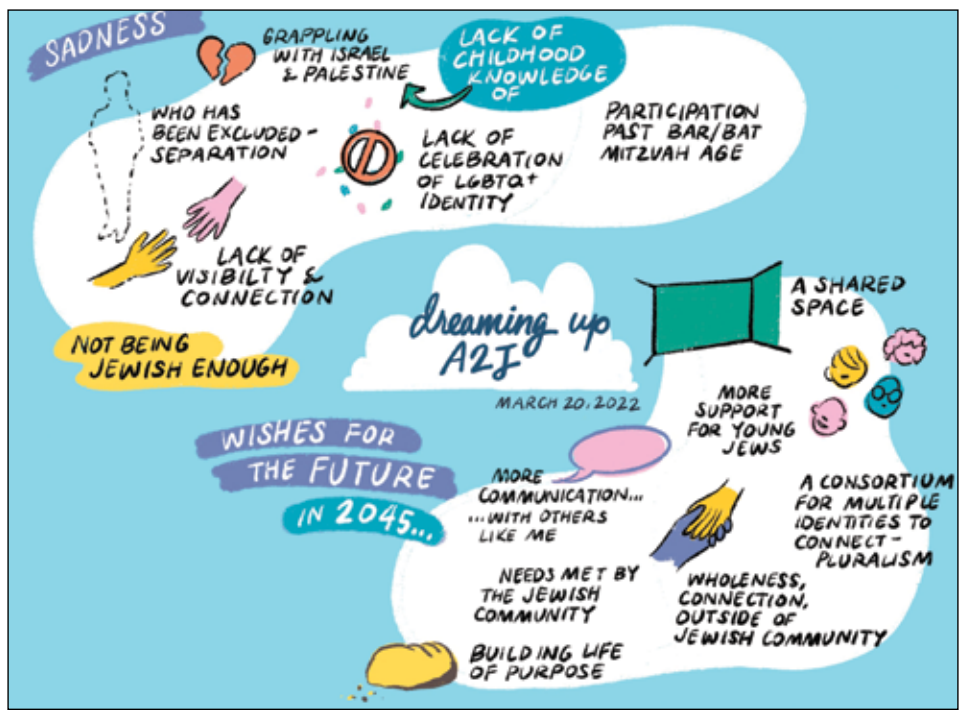
Participants expressed appreciation for ways the community has served them, and also spoke of a hunger for a different type of Jewish community: one that offers more intergenerational programming, one that creates pluralistic and multi-denominational spaces for ritual and socializing, and a community that represents and includes those who have been marginalized.

" What stood out to me was just how eager folks across different denominations in Ann Arber were to meet each other and celebrate with one another. Sometimes we think of the actual prayer/ ritual as a barrier for celebrating with different levels of observance... But in actuality that was not the casee!"
Abby Calef, graduate student

This was a first step of a long-term, open-ended process. The conversations will continue among all those curious about what our Jewish community can become.

- The drawing on this page was created by graphic notetaker Yen Azzaroas the meeting was in process. More of her graphic notes can be seen at washtenawjewishnews.org/wp/dreaming-a2j
- Please see the article on page 8, "Federation announces two new funding opportunities to foster innovation and collaboration."
- Also, June 13th, "Dreaming Up A2j" has booked The Ark for a Moth-style storytellling event. Look for more details soon. ■





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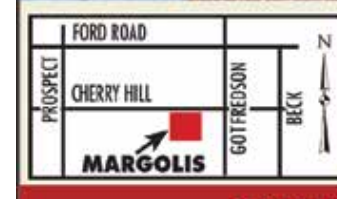

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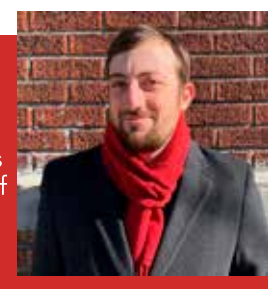
THURSDAY, MAY 19 @ 7:00 P.M.

Father Charles Coughlin, a Catholic priest in Detroit, broadcasting pioneer and celebrity, used his nationwide radio sermons to promote fascism and antisemitic conspiracy theories in the run-up to WWII. He became America's first mass-media demagogue, cultivating a loyal following of violent Nazi gangs, and created a new method for spreading hate to the masses.



Local journalist Andrew Lapin is the creator and host of "Radioactive," a podcast about Father Coughlin at Michigan Radio from Tablet Studios and the WNET Group. He was the editor-in-chief of the *Detroit Jewish News* and a film critic for *NPR, Vulture, The Economist* and other outlets.

Andrew Lapin -- who grew up near Coughlin's church in Royal Oak, MI -- will share clips from his podcast and insights from his research into Coughlin's life and methods.

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By Chuck Newman

Editor's Note: Chuck Newman hosts a biweekly series of "Conversations," presented by the Jewish Cultural Arts and Education department of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. The talk show format of the Zoom presentations highlights Chuck's easygoing style and deep curiosity about science, politics, and connections between our local environment and the world. You can find this interview and other previous shows at https://jccannarbor.org/event/conversations.

The mission of Givat Haviva International School (GHIS) in northern Israel is to build peace through education. This message is resonating far and wide with students and stakeholders alike — individuals who appreciate being part of a project that is creating a new cohort of leaders for change. Indeed, many of its graduates and students aspire to someday be the leaders of their countries and pursue peace. Recently I had the opportunity to interview several of them along with the executive director of the school, Nurite Gery, and based on what I learned I wouldn't bet against them.

Teena

GHIS is a coed boarding high school that brings together promising young students from diverse communities and varying economic backgrounds. Roommates are carefully chosen to be from different backgrounds and much of the most important learning at the school takes place out of the classroom.

As an International Baccalaureate High School, GHIS is academically demanding. Often this is the reason students or their parents apply to the school. Once there, they develop their capacity as leaders for cross-cultural cooperation and conflict resolution through a unique approach blending academic excellence with emotional intelligence.

Nurite

A major reason GHIS is so successful is the dedication of its staff, from Nurite Gery, who was a successful executive in the pharmaceutical industry who wanted to do something more meaningful, to Yara Amaira, a boarding counselor from the West Bank who had the strong belief that the way forward — to a peaceful region — is for diverse people to have opportunities to meet and build true friendships.

Hussein

The best way to appreciate why the school is so successful is to hear the students' stories.

Basak says. "As a Muslim Turkish girl who had decided to study in Israel, my parents' friends' reactions were unexpectedly adverse. Turkey is involved in the conflict, and the news there about Israel was very different to the one I experienced at GHIS … My life in GHIS has been a new adventure that offers me a fusion of Israeli Jewish and Arab culture, and many others, with its multicultural atmosphere … In a short while we learned to listen and respect each other's perspectives. The shift of looking at everything from only one perspective to understanding the importance of looking at problems from all sides has changed my approach and taught me to appreciate new ideas."

Christina

Blerta adds. "I no longer was the girl from Kosovo who hoped to learn something and make a small change in her country. I became a strong, powerful young woman who strives to educate herself and the world, not only about the suffering of my own people, but the suffering of others. I came out of GHIS as a young leader who strives to not only make a change but be the change."

The amazing Christina, who could be the president of her country someday, says "My country of origin is South Sudan, a place known to many as a land of wars and misfortunes; being part of such a community has never been easy. My whole life was centered around conflicts and as a result of that, I never settled in one country. I was never welcomed in any society I lived in because of my background and skin color. I was born in Lebanon, raised in Egypt and fled to Israel in 2007 when I was 6 years old. Givat Haviva was all I ever wanted and dreamed of, its mission to build a diverse community of young leaders who strive to achieve

continued to page 19

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My virtual journey to Uman

By Shifra Epstein

Since the fall of Communism more than thirty years ago, the city of Uman, in the center of Ukraine, has become the most visited city in Eastern Europe among Jews worldwide. The main reason for visiting Uman by Jews is the shrine of the Hasidic Rebbe Nachman of Breslov (1773–1810, the great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov), located in the city.

During last year on Rosh Hashanah, more than 30,000 Jews visited Rebbe Nachman's shrine.

My virtual journey to Uman starts with my reflection on my physical visit to the city, in the summer of 2008. I traveled to Uman from Kyiv, 120 miles to the south. I took a minibus from the Central Bus Station in Kyiv, the same bus station that has been featured by the media showing Ukrainians leaving the country to Poland.

In Uman, I spent a great deal of time in the women's section in the shrine of Rebbe Nachman. There were only three women in the women's section of the shrine. One woman brought me a copy of Tikun HaKlali, "The General Remedy," a set of ten psalms suggested by Rebbe Nachman as a means of repentance for all sins. She suggested that I recite several psalms from Tikun HaKlali, which I did. It is my custom when visiting a place where it is the custom to pray, to pray.

I also took a half hour walk from the shrine to Sofiyivka Park, one among the marvels of Ukraine. It was Rebbe Nachman's favorite place to meditate and many Breslover Hasidim meditate in the park when they are visiting Uman.

I strolled on Pushkina Street, which has been renamed Rebbe Nachman's Street and is the Jewish hub of the city. Today this area is known as Israel Uman, referring to the Israelis who make up the majority of Jews in Uman. I ate in a Yemenite restaurant. I visited the Judaica Center where I met several of the local Israelis. In the Judaica store I bought a hand painted matryoshka, a nesting doll of Rabbi Israel Odosser (1895–1994), the popular and admired spiritual leader of the Breslov "spin-off," the Nach Nach. The doll was made through the collaboration of a Breslov Hasid and a local Ukrainian maker of matryoshkas.

Since my 2008 visit, the Jewish community has grown. On the eve of the Russian invasion, Israel Uman consisted of approximately 270 people, mostly families with a few singles.

Early during the lead-up to the invasion, I was surprised that no one among Jewish leaders, religious and non-religious, as well the Israeli Prime Minster, Naftali Bennet — a buddy of Putin — asked to protect the shrine during the war by declaring it an international monument.

My virtual journey to Uman during the Russian invasion started when I discovered the Hebrew Facebook page for the "Grave of Rabbi Nachman from Breslev."

The Facebook page is sponsored by United Breslov in Uman, a global organization with headquarters in Safed, Israel. United Breslov takes care of all the Breslov activities in Uman, including the upkeep of the Shrine of Rebbe Nachman as well as the religious activities in the shrine.

The Facebook page is also a means to raise money for the upkeep of United Breslov in Uman.

In a three-minute video taken by the security camera on February 24th at the shrine and posted on their Facebook page, Russian airstrikes can be seen targeting a military base outside of the city of Uman, very close to the shrine. One civilian, not from the Breslov community, driving on a bike, was killed.

After the missile attack, I found on a post reporting that the majority among the 270 members of Israel Uman have left Uman, mostly going to Israel. They left on buses organized by the Israeli Hatzaklah "rescue" organization.

The director of the shrine, Rabbi Bin Nun, has been posting daily instructions to the Hasidim who stayed behind. Early on, he invited the citizens of Uman to come and stay in the shelter of the shrine. Rabbi Bin Nun made sure to let everyone know that the daily prayers, as well as on the Sabbath, will continue as usual.

On the 27th of February, three days after Uman was bombarded, I virtually attended a special prayer service at the shrine, one among many services aimed at praying for peace and the cessation of war. Like other events around the shrine, the service was broadcast on Facebook. It started in the afternoon and continued into the night.

I counted 11 men in the men's section of the shrine. The participants were described on Facebook as "sherit haPleta," a Hebrew term for Jewish Holocaust survivors living in Displaced Persons (DP) camps. After praying the evening prayer, the participants recited Tikun HaKlali, the Ten Psalms of "General Remedy," which I had recited on my 2008 visit to the shrine. And then, a ceremony called Kabbalat Ol Malchut Shamayim, "accepting the kingship of Heaven or the Yoke of Heaven" was performed.

In the center of the service was the recitation of Tefilah LeShalom, A Prayer for Peace. The Hebrew words of the prayer were composed by Rebbe Nachman more than two hundred years ago. The words were also posted on Facebook. I was surprised to discover that Tefilah Leshalom with some modification has been incorporated into part of the Morning Service for Shabbat Services of both the Conservative and Reform Movements. The prayer is published in their siddurim and is recited after the prayer for the State of Israel.

Here is the translation to English with some modification of Tefilah LeShalom from the siddur of the Conservative Movement in which I am a member:

May we see the day when war and bloodshed cease,
When a greater peace will embrace the whole world.
Then nation will not threaten nation,
And the human family will not again know war,
For all who live on earth will realize
We have not come into being to hate or destroy.
We have come into being to praise, to labor, and to love.
Compassionate God

A Prayer for Peace continues to be posted on Facebook of the Grave of Rabbi Nachman from Breslev.

On March 17, in the middle of the war, Purim was also celebrated in the shrine, as the few male Jews, sherit haPleta, who stayed in Uman were gathering to read the megillah and celebrate Purim. Watching them on Facebook I could not resist thinking: are there other Jewish communities in the Ukraine that celebrate Purim?

Unfortunately, the Facebook page of the Grave of Rabbi Nachman from Breslev has almost completely ignored the courageous women who decided to stay in Uman during the Russian invasion. Hence, I expanded my virtual journey to an online newspaper that covered the war in Uman. Here is what the online *Times of Israel* wrote about Odele, a 46-year-old Israeli woman, one of two women who didn't leave and stayed in Uman. Odele left Israel in 2020 with her nine children to be close to the grave of Rebbe Nachman. The interview took place while Odele was leaning over her prayer book, lit with a pocket torch. Her son, one of her nine children, is glued to her side.

"We spend the whole day in the women's section of the synagogue in the shrine, praying, studying the Torah".

The war, she says, is "a sign from the messiah."

"It was written. It will start with war, then will come the apocalypse," says Odele.

With Passover coming soon, whether the war will be over or will still be going on, I am planning to incorporate the Conservative version of Tefilah Leshalom in Hebrew and English in our egalitarian Seder. I am also planning to display the nesting doll of Rabbi Yisrael Oddoser and wish that all the talented Ukrainian artists will be able to leave their ammunition and return to making their traditional art.

You may also undertake a virtual journey into one courageous Jewish community. Just look at the Facebook of the Grave of Rabbi Nachman from Breslev. ■

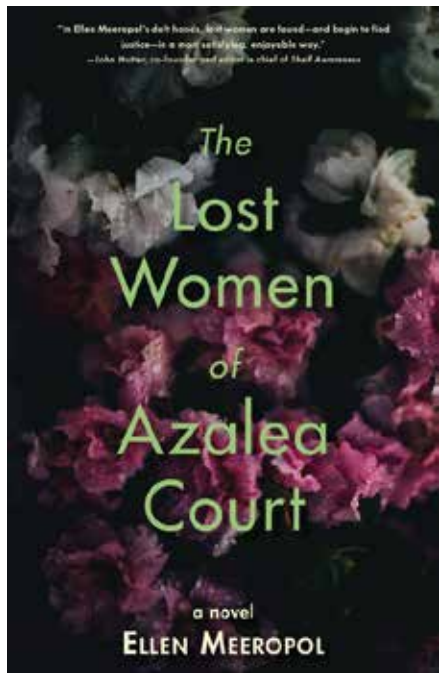
Two authors discuss writing, memory, and the Holocaust

By Ellen Meeropol and Caroline Heller

Ellen Meeropol is the author of the novels The Lost Women of Azalea Court (forthcoming fall 2022), Her Sister's Tattoo, Kinship of Clover, On Hurricane Island, and House Arrest. Her work has been honored by the Sarton Women's Prize, The Women's National Book Association, and the Massachusetts Center for the Book.

Caroline Heller is the author of Reading Claudius and has been the director of the interdisciplinary PhD program in educational studies at Lesley University, where she is also a professor in the Graduate School of Education. Her previous book is Until We Are Strong Together. She lives in Northampton, Massachusetts with her family.

Ellen Meeropol: Like many other Jews whose grandparents or parents escaped from antisemitism in Europe, I've read dozens of books about the Holocaust. Novels, history, memoir, all detailing the events, the losses, the resistance, the courage, the fear. Some of these books, like *After Long Silence* by Helen Fremont and *From Holocaust to Hope: Shores Beyond Shores* by Irene Butter, burrowed through my skin and incorporated into my cells, becoming part of how I face and feel the world. Each of these books contribute to the universality of the experience of genocide, the particularity of individual people and their personal journeys, and the big questions about the nature of evil in our world. So, before I start reading a memoir, especially one focused on the Holocaust, I wonder what this book will teach me, what new understandings it will offer, in what ways it will open my eyes. I wonder if it will simply break my heart again or contribute to illumination of some sort. So, when a friend sent me a copy of your memoir, *Reading Claudius*, I initially wasn't sure I wanted to go there again. Can we begin this conversation with you telling me what part of this universe of history, pain, and survival your book inhabits?



Caroline Heller: "Burrowing through my skin and incorporated into my cells, becoming part of how I face and feel the world" — I read that line again and again, for it is not only so beautiful, it also speaks to my own body/soul sense while writing *Reading Claudius*, and occasionally when reading other books related to the Holocaust. My biggest "burrowing" experience while reading other works was when I read Anne Michaels' *Fugitive Pieces* some years ago. And perhaps most of all, reading Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*. It's interesting in and of itself, this question of what literature allows for this feeling of being almost transported into a new sense of being.

My impetus in writing Reading Claudius was both to memorialize my parents' journey in some way, and to unpack the meaning of their lives in Central Europe before Hitler, as well as my own cultural inheritance. Growing up, my brother and I were insulated in our family home of books and records and constant references to poetry and literature and theater. This was a world that Hitler tore apart. He appropriated Goethe, the poet, for his own evil purposes, twisted philosophy and literature to suit his goals. The heart of those writers and philosophers remained strong for my parents and uncle. I believe that my big purpose may have been to share that, to know more about that myself. I also wanted to better understand my uncle Erich Heller's impact on my brother, my parents, and me by delving more fully into his relationship with my mother and how my father all his life in some sense played second fiddle to his brother.

As to the Holocaust itself — to feel its impact is so slippery for me. There were moments writing Reading Claudius when I felt I was meeting those horrors for the very first time. It was almost as though I knew nothing about it before writing my book, when, in fact, I knew a great deal. I had just not yet — to return to your beautiful phrase — allowed it to burrow into my cells.

Ellen: Tell me more about your parents' cultural displacement and how it affected you growing up.

Caroline: My brother and I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago — in a particularly un-intellectual community — Republican, Christian, sports-loving. My parents were Democrats, religionless in a certain way, and they had zero to little interest in American culture. In our home were constant references to poetry and literature and theater. Most of the references were not part of the world in which I then lived — my parents were Central European intellectuals, but I had no conception of what that was, what that meant, as I was growing up. When I finally did grow up and truly yearn for my own intellectual world, I started to understand what they had offered me by the "idea" values they lived by. I grew up in a world where philosophical ideas were not really the currency, and yet in my home they were. I wanted to unpack that both for myself and for readers.

I remember once sitting in my high school English class and my teacher referred to Dr. Zhivago. She asked if anyone had read it, and if anyone knew who the author was. I alone had. I alone did. On Christmas, instead of bibles and Santa Claus, my parents read to us from Dr. Zhivago. It was amazing to put all that together while writing my book — to realize how fully my parents had been marinated in a culture where literature, politics, social life were so fully intertwined. They never found that again, and I wonder if much of my life I was looking for a reasonable substitute, just as they were. I don't think any of us found it. I still long for it, almost on their behalf.

Ellen: I'm curious about the role of religion in the lives of your parents, and your family, growing up. Other memoirists write that their parents, after surviving camps and exile, left their "dangerous" Jewish identity behind and joined church congregations as yours did. When did you learn about your parents' Judaism? How has this affected your own religious or spiritual practice?

Caroline: My father joined the Unitarian Church, already in Washington, DC, before my brother and I were born. My mother never felt comfortable joining, and told me that when my father joined the Third Unitarian Church in Chicago, she vomited all the way there, for she felt that she was betraying her parents, who were quite religious. Unitarians, as you probably know, are so ecumenical. Lots of congregants who also identify as Jewish seem to feel at home in Unitarianism. I think the church in Chicago meant a lot to my brother because it introduced him to political activism, which has always been central to his life. The Third Unitarian Church felt far closer to my own sense of identity than anything I found in the suburb where we grew up. As an adult, I've never joined a church or a synagogue, but one of my doctoral students is a rabbi. Through her humanism, I am becoming quite interested in being part of her synagogue. We may well join. It may provide a spiritual home that has been lacking in my life.

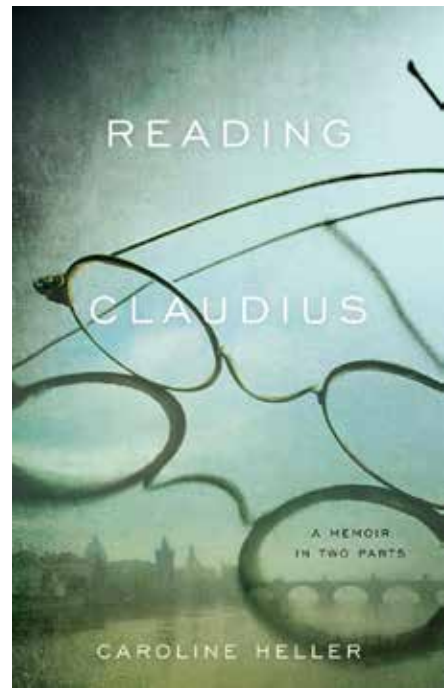
Ellen: There's so much drama in your memoir, Caroline. Both the big picture drama of young people forced to make impossible decisions about leaving home, family, culture, and domestic drama. As a novelist, I must ask you if you ever considered writing your family story as fiction.

Caroline: Oh how I did. And truth be told, I kind of wish I had! I had been trained in social science research and had never written creatively except for the occasional super bad poem I'd scribble in my journal. At the time of researching and writing *Reading Claudius*, the thought of writing a novel was foreign to me and far more intimidating than thinking of my book as nonfiction. But *Reading Claudius* came out recently in paperback and this seemed like an invitation to reread it for the first time in several years. I realized anew how many of the details, while based on research — letters, interviews, archival documents — were amplified by my imagination. I realized more than ever that I was indeed writing the book novelistically. I started writing in that mode and it then felt almost ordained to be what it became. I guess that's how writing works. One doesn't really think about genre in the way bookstores and libraries are arranged, but rather, how can I feel my way into this story in order to put it on paper? I suppose there's another reason, too, why I didn't object to it being seen as a memoir rather than a novel. I wanted to truly say to the world that this happened to my family. All this happened! I did not want anyone to think I "made this up," for in some deeply true way, it is factually the story of my parents' and uncle's lives, and of my brother's and mine. But I do love your question and will keep thinking about the why's and why not's of how one decides to "define" one's work in terms of genre.

Ellen: In the Foreword to *Reading Claudius*, you write, "Unable to know my parents' and uncle's early world in its fullness, I tried in this way to approximate a representation of its wholeness. Doing so was my way of fulfilling a lifelong yearning to literally make my parents' world whole again …" Can you talk more about that sense of responsibility you describe, to your parents and the world that shaped them?

Caroline: This sense of responsibility was part of the rationale for letting myself imagine aspects of their lives — their conversations in the coffee houses, the political meetings, their meeting at the lake in Komotau. While I was growing up, I had a young person's inflated notion that life began with me, while all along somehow sensing that something lost, something I would never experience or see, was what really mattered. Mattered in a much larger sense. I'm not sure that I became fully conscious, came to understand something beyond the primal "sensing" I just described, until I wrote *Reading Claudius*. Both my parents were gone by then, as was my uncle. Little that I'd read in books or saw in film or theater — not even traveling to Prague with my parents in 1982 — allowed me to experience their world. Writing the book made me fully conscious for the first time that this was a world, had it not been for Hitler and his enablers, that I might have known as intimately as they had — for it would have been my world too. This awareness came with a kind of sorrow-stricken retrospect. I could see my mother anew as my Brownie Scout assistant leader in the suburbs of Chicago and realize that inside she might have been wailing: "What am I doing here? This was not supposed to be my destiny!" Or see my father thinking he ought to play golf and root for the Chicago White Sox when these suburban inclinations were so far from his own inner world and needs — so fully not meant to be his destiny. I wanted to bring something back to them, something so precious, so linked to their truest souls. Walter Benjamin said

discomfort with



something like this: that the living must bring back meanings "withheld from the dead." It would take a better writer than me to truly do that, but I felt it my duty to try.

Ellen: That sense of cultural dislocation is central to the experience of being a refugee. *Reading Claudius* is about immigration and exile, about people leaving beloved homelands because to stay is to die. Has your study of this phenomenon in your family brought you any insights into the crisis we face now at our southern border?

Caroline: I think it has helped me to understand their losses in a more profound and connected way. They are Mexican refugees, Central American refugees, Haitian refugees, Afghan, and Syrian refugees, of course — in all their beautiful distinctiveness. But they are also my parents and grandparents. And they are also my brother and me, were we born but a couple of decades before we were. I'm not sure this gives me insight, but it does give me kinship.

Ellen: One of the things I love most about your memoir is a peek into the literary fabric of your family. The poet, Matthias Claudius, is almost a stand-in for the expression of familial love. Tell me about that.

Caroline: A friend let me know that someone she knew hated my book, only to discover that she had read *I, Claudius* by Robert Graves, thinking that this was the book my friend recommended to her! Phew! Yes, Matthias Claudius is not nearly as well-known as the infamous emperor. But his poetry was a staple for Central European children. And you're right, Elli, the bedtime recitations and references to his poems, particularly in my mother's growing up world, seemed to be filled with tenderness — a vehicle for parents to express their love for their children. But Claudius was also a poet that adults esteemed. Erich Heller wrote about his poetry and there have been studies of his work. You point to something that was true, too, about my parents' interactions with my brother and me when we were growing up. They both had memorized many poems and they came forth like endearments, particularly from my father who was not comfortable with more direct offerings of affection. When my mother's illness kind of tumbled the wiring of her brain, these early poems, too, came pouring out, and I sensed the reassurance they offered her. Toward the end of her life, the one moment when I thought my mother communicated to me that she knew she was dying — she did so by reciting Goethe's *The King of Death* (Erlkönig). She told me he was at the window of her hospital room. I knew what she was telling me.

Ellen: One last question. In my forthcoming novel *The Lost Women of Azalea Court*, an elderly psychiatrist who was a child survivor of the Holocaust later does some very bad things. I'm curious about how people, like my character, who have suffered deeply at the hands of others rationalize their own bad behavior as "earned" or necessary for self-protection. Do you have any insights about this?

Caroline: I so wish that I did, for it strikes me that this is at the crux of some of the biggest challenges in our world. Though you're writing about a single human being, I think the problem you describe names what has happened to the government of Israel, for instance. There is a kind of commodification of the Holocaust that seems to transform complex historical insight into a kind of "earned right" on the part of Israel to behave abysmally toward Palestinians. This dynamic — for, of course, antisemitism remains all over the world, too — is so knotted, so complex, that it seems to defy all efforts to resolve, much less shed light on these ongoing dynamics of oppression. Victim becomes perpetrator. This is what your novel seems to be examining.

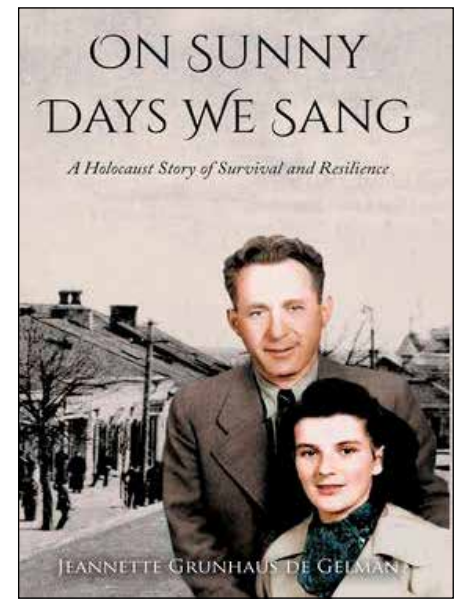
I have no question that my father's psyche was profoundly damaged by his 6 years in Buchenwald and Auschwitz, and it was not easy for my brother and me to be his children. That said, my father was not a bitter man, and I admired this enormously. He emerged from the camps and into his "new life" as a far more anxious human being than I suspect he would have been had his life's journey been different. But he lacked both bitterness and the sufferer's sense of entitlement or revenge, for lack of a better way of putting it, that your novel examines. Primo Levi struck me as having a similar form of humanism. There was even a sweetness, surely a generosity in Levi's writings. He examined the world so carefully, but refrained at all the right moments (it seems to me) from judging it or acting out his pain in the form of cruelty to others. This generosity is, perhaps, a lesson for all of us.. ■

On sunny days we sang

By Judi Lempert Green

On Sunny Days We Sang was written by my good friend at Wellesley College, Jeannette Grunhaus de Gelman. It is a Holocaust story but not a typical one. There are no close-ups of concentration camp atrocities. Instead, this is the true story of how two young Jews — who became the author's parents — survived WWII in Poland while they both lost their entire families.

The author vividly describes the pre-war lives they led: her mother, the sheltered teen-aged daughter in a religious household; and her father, 20 years older, a successful, multilingual owner of lumber businesses who moved easily between big city life and his shtetl hometown, a Zionist who had spent time in Palestine but came home to help in the family business. We see how, when the Germans arrive, the heat is turned up so gradually, the walls close in so slowly, that the roundups and executions that are to come are literally unthinkable.



The story of how these two survive, separately and then together, is a page-turner. The outsized role that luck plays in surviving comes through powerfully, as does the importance of "righteous gentiles" who at crucial points offer shelter and protection. This is also a story of the trauma created by surviving under these circumstances of prolonged terror, hunger, and cold — circumstances we are again seeing in present-day Ukraine.

This story is also unique for American readers in its tale of post-war resettlement, not in the United States, but in Venezuela. I went to Venezuela for Jeannette's wedding right after exams in December 1967 and stayed with the family for a week while she went off for her honeymoon. So, I got to know her family, especially her 18-year-old brother who later came to Ann Arbor for his advanced psychiatric training. While he did his residency and fellowship at the University his young daughter attended the Hebrew Day School. He now practices medicine in Tel Aviv. ■

Givat Haviva Continued from page 15

positive social impacts towards a just, shared society and peaceful world was what drew me to the school. Today, after completing my two years of experience in Givat Haviva, I can certainly say that I am a leader and will always be. My past has not defined me, destroyed me, deterred me, or defeated me; it has only strengthened me to do my best for a better future."

Tohar, a student from Katzrin in the Golan Heights, said, "Of course there are arguments and tensions, but in the end the beautiful friendships were simply stronger than anything. We all live here together, eat, consult about school, miss home, and laugh together in the room before going to bed. Walking the streets with people who are very different from us."

Teena's unlikely story illustrates the effect GHIS has on its students and staff. She is an Orthodox Israeli girl, and she and Hussein, an Arab boy from an East Jerusalem neighborhood known for its discontent with Israeli rule, were initially wary of one another. Over time they have become great friends, and they and their parents have been welcome guests in each other's homes.

The compassion the students feel for one another was never more evident than when they comforted the eight Russian students who were devastated by the invasion of Ukraine and at the same time they welcomed the new traumatized students from Ukraine.

To learn more about the school go to https://gh-is.org/, and listen to the students being interviewed at https://jccannarbor.org/event/conversations. Nurite would be happy to answer any questions you might have and suggest ways you can help support GHIS and their important work. ■

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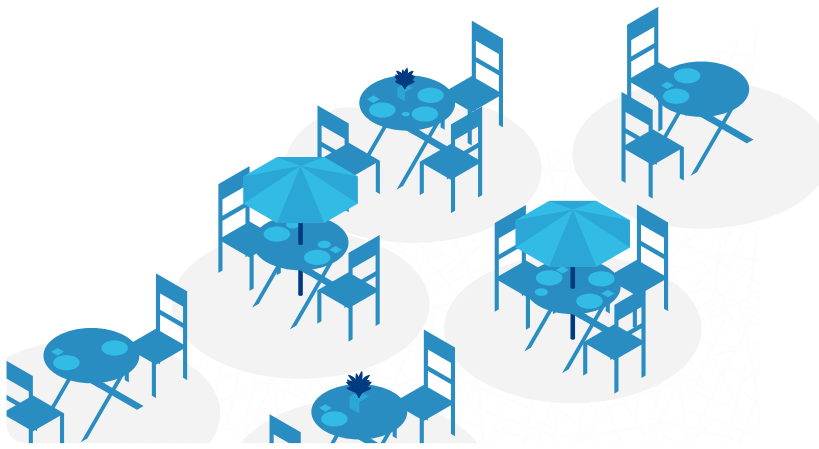

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Public transit reduces our nation's carbon emissions by 37 million metric tons annually.

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Visit **TheRideYourWay.org** to learn the benefits of public transit in the greater Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area.

Calendar

May 22

As our community eases into in-person events with sensitivity to changing pandemic safety, always check websites or call for updates before planning to attend anything listed here and for prayer services.

Sunday 1,
Rosh Hodesh Iyar

JCLP Graduation. 10:30 a.m.

Rosh Hodesh Iyyar Online Minyan: Pardes Hannah. 10 a.m..

Women's Rosh Hodesh Gathering: AAOM. 8 p.m.

Monday 2,
Rosh Hodesh Iyar

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Rosh Hodesh Iyyar Circle: Pardes Hannah. 7 p.m.

Outdoor Spring Campfire Concert with Aly Halpert, Batya Levine, and Arielle Korman: TBE. 7 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday 3

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Itzhak Perlman at the Wharton Center: 7:30 p.m.

Yom HaZikaron Ceremony: BIC. A reflective and respectful service of poetry, testimony, and prayer remembering those who have fallen in Israel's struggle for survival. Hybrid format (i.e. both in person and streaming). Zoom links are available on the Beth Israel website 7 p.m.

Yom Hazikaron Ceremony and play, "Know, Knock," hosted by Detroit Federation. 6:15 p.m.

Wednesday 4

Yidish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. About 45 minutes each of conversation and reading. Free and open to all those interested in Yiddish language, literature, and culture, no matter what level of
proficiency. For more information, to get the link, and to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please email Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu at least one day before scheduled meeting day every Wednesday (except major Jewish holidays). 2 p.m.

Yom HaZikaron Service: AAOM. 12:30 p.m.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut 74 – A Night at the Movies. Federation. 7:30 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 5

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Yom HaAtzmaut Celebration: AAOM. RSVP required to rabbayael@annarborminyan.org. 6 p.m.

Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration in Song & Word: TBE 7 p.m.

Friday 6
Candle Lighting 8:22 p.m. Kedoshim

First Friday Shabbat: JCS. Includes secular Jewish readings, singing, candle lighting, challah and wine rituals, and a Yahrtzeit observance to remember loved ones. Children are welcome. 6:30-7:30p.m. Check website for details. jewishculturalsociety.org. For more information: 734-975-9872 or info@jewishculturalsociety.org.

Saturday 7
Havdallah 9:28 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50–9:50 a.m.

Sunday 8

Monday 9

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 10

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Wednesday 11

Parsha Lunch and Learn. AAOM. Explore themes of the weekly Torah portion. Zoom Link: https://bit.ly/ParshaLunchandLearn. 12:30 p.m.

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

Schmooze and Booze: Federation Women's Philanthropy, at York. 7 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 12

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Friday 13
Candle Lighting 8:29 p.m. Emor

Musical Singing and Guitar Service with Rabbi Aura Ahuvia: BIC. 6 p.m.

Saturday 14
Havdallah 9:37 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50–9:50 a.m.

Second Saturday Shabbat Morning Service: AARC. Led by Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner. Everyone is welcome! Hybrid, in person at the JCC and Zoom link will be sent out the week before the event. Ta'Shma at 10 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. to noon.

Elana Arian Community Concert: TBE. 7 p.m.

Sunday 15

AARC Book Group: AARC. Ladies and Gentlemen, The Bible! by Jonathan Goldstein. The book discussion will be led by Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner. Email Greg Saltzman, gsaltzman@albion.edu. 12:30 p.m.

Monday 16

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 17

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Wednesday 18

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 19, Lag b'Omer

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Andrew Lapin - Radioactive: How Father Coughlin Brought Antisemitism and Demagoguery to American Mass Media: TBE. 7.p.m.

Lag b'Omer Bonfire: AAOM. 8 p.m.

Friday 20
Candle Lighting 8:36 p.m. Behar

Saturday 21
Havdallah 9:45 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50–9:50 a.m.

Serenity Shabbat: BIC. 9:30 p.m.

Sunday 22

Monday 23

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 24

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

EMU 10-year anniversary celebration: EMU Jewish Studies. 6 p.m.

Wednesday 25

Parsha Lunch and Learn. AAOM. Explore themes of the weekly Torah portion. Bechukotai: Walking in God's Ways.. Zoom Link: https://bit.ly/ParshaLunchandLearn. 12:30 p.m.

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

Annual Meeting: Federation. In-person and virtual. 7 p.m.

Beyond Right: Chabad House. New six session class begins. 7:30 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 26

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Friday 27
Candle Lighting 8:43 p.m. Bechukotai

Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat: AARC. Hybrid in person at the JCC and Zoom. Link will be sent out the week before the event. 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 28
Havdallah 9:52 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50–9:50 a.m.

Sunday 29

Children's Shavuot Craft: AAOM. 9 a.m.

Monday 30

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 31
Rosh Hodesh Sivan

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Rosh Hodesh Sivan Online Minyan: Pardes Hannah. 9 a.m.

Rosh Hodesh Sivan Circle: Pardes Hannah. 7 p.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Phone numbers, websites and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM): 1429 Hill Street, 248-408-3269, annarborminyan.org

Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734.445.1910, aarecon.org

Beth Israel Congregation (BIC): 2000 Washtenaw Ave, 734-665-9897, bethisrael-aa.org

Chabad House: 715 Hill Street, 734-995-3276, jewmich.com

Frankel Center: 202 S. Thayer St., lsa.umich.edu/judaic/

Jewish Community Center (JCC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 745-971-0990, jccannarbor.org

Jewish Cultural Society (JCS): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-975-9872, jewishculturalsociety.org

Jewish Family Services (JFS): 2245 South State Street, 734-769-0209, jfsannarbor.org

Jewish Federation: 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-677-0100, jewishannarbor.org

Pardes Hannah: 2010 Washtenaw Ave, 734-761-5324, pardeshannah.org

Temple Beth Emeth (TBE): 2309 Packard Road, 734-665-4744, templebethemeth.org

UM Hillel: 1429 Hill Street 734-769-0500, michiganhillel.org

Happy Birthday Israel

Lonnie Sussman, special to the WJN

It's always been easy to remember when Israel became a modern state: I was born a few months later. My ancestors came from Eastern Europe, known as the Pale of Settlement, a vast area ruled by the Russian Empire. Many of those areas were also known by different local names, populated by different ethnic groups, spoke different languages, and had diverse religious practices. My maternal Zaydie was born near Kyiv and my maternal Bubbie was born in what is now Poland. On the paternal branch of the family tree are people from Lithuania. All those countries were part of the Russian Empire, but before the Russian tzars, there were other empires and other rulers.

As I write this column, we still don't know the outcome of the war in Ukraine. The Zaydie who came from there was lucky to leave and make a life here in the United States. The Bubbie who left Poland was sent to the U.S. by her family due to neighbors warning them about a pogrom. The Zaydie who left Lithuania escaped a prison term for distributing political flyers. His sister left Lithuania for Israel early in the 20th century.

All my grandparents were Zionists. They prayed for and raised money for the new state and were able to contact other relatives who survived the Holocaust and lived the rest of their lives in Israel. Some lived in cities and others on a kibbutz in the north. In short, my entire life is connected to Israel in many ways.

In Deuteronomy the land of Israel is described as "A land of wheat, and barley and vines (grapes) and fig trees and pomegranates, of olive oil and honey" (date honey). These are some of the basic foods that grow in the region. When we think Israeli food today, we add eggplants, and tomatoes and cucumbers as well as chicken and turkey, fish from the Kinneret and from the Mediterranean, cheese, and other milk products (ice cream). In the early decades of the 20th century, Jews arriving in Palestine ate very simply and not very much. They learned to forage the local area for greens, mushrooms, and fruits. As the Jewish population grew it also diversified. Everyone brought their own food traditions and recipes which took advantage of local produce and amalgamated with the traditional Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese foodways.

Jewish Israeli food became known for simplicity and freshness. I think about pita and felafels, shwarma, chopped tomato and cucumber salads, hard boiled eggs, and turkey schnitzel.

To celebrate Yom Ha-atzmaut (Independence Day) I've been thinking about all the changes in Israel and in the world over the past seven decades. Since I'm still "travelling" through the food lens I thought it might be fun to look at how the food in Israel has changed over this time. At the same time, I'm thinking about how my taste buds have changed over the years. How about yours?

Fruited Bulgur Salad

The Gourmet Jewish Cook by Judy Zeidler

Serves 24 as part of a buffet, or a family for the week. I don't do story problems, so you do the math for a smaller amount.

16 ounces bulgur wheat, soaked in cold water for 45 minutes
1 cup raisins
1 cup chopped pitted dates
1 cup minced parsley
½ cup minced fresh mint
4 green onions, thinly sliced
3 oranges, peeled and cut into sections
Salt and pepper to taste
1 orange, peeled and thinly sliced in rounds for a garnish
Lemon-Orange Dressing
¾ cup olive oil
½ cup lemon juice
3 tbs orange ice
1 tsp each of cinnamon and cumin
1 tbs sugar, or to taste

Whisk the olive oil, lemon ice, and orange juice together in a smaller bowl. Then whisk in the cinnamon, cumin, and sugar. Cover with plastic wrap and chill.

Squeeze the water out of the bulgur and transfer it to a large bowl. Add the raisins, dates, parsley, mint, green onions, and orange sections. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss gently. Season to taste with the salt and pepper and add the almonds before serving. Garnish with the orange rounds and a few mint leaves.

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Avocado Hadar

Serves 6

This recipe was created by Mordechai Drucker.

Years ago, so many that I don't remember when or where or why, I got a series of recipe cards called Israeli Cooking. Originally there were 22 cards with a beautiful picture on the front and the recipe on the back. Now there are 16. The 3 chefs who created the recipes in this collection are from very different backgrounds — Polish, Bulgarian, and Tunisian — and they represent the ways in which traditions from around the world blend with the foods grown in Israel and the Middle East.

3 medium-size ripe avocados
2 oranges
2 grapefruit
12 red cherries
6 leaves of Bibb lettuce

Slice the avocado lengthwise into 2 halves. Peel the citrus fruits, separate into segments, and carefully remove the skins. Arrange the fruit inside the avocado and let stand for 30 minutes for the juices to be absorbed. Decorate with cherries. Place on a leaf of Bibb lettuce and serve as a first course.

"Merchavia" Turkey Roll

Serves 6

This is another recipe from Mordechai Drucker.

1-3/4 pound turkey breast
4 oz pitted green olives – use 2–3 oz for the stuffing and the rest go on top of the dish
2 oz ginger or ½ oz ginger powder
1 egg
Salt and pepper to taste
Chicken bouillon 1 or 2 cubes
Flour
5 oz marparv or non-dairy "butter"
¼ bottle sweet white wine (or grape juice)
1 cup orange juice
Black pitted olives for garnish

Cut the turkey breast into six 4oz slices and place on a flat board. Mince the remaining poultry meat with the green olives, ginger, egg, salt, and pepper. Arrange the mixture on the flat slices of turkey breast then roll the slices in a little flour and pin each one firmly with toothpicks, lengthwise. Use a large frying pan, add the marparv and melt it and coat the rolls. Then arrange the rolls in a baking dish. Leave the melted marparv in the frying pan and add the wine, orange juice, and bouillon, and let it boil for about 5 minutes. Chop the remaining green olives and the black olives and sprinkle over the rolls in the baking dish. Then add the sauce and bake in 350-degree oven for about 25–30 minutes. The chef recommends serving this with tomatoes stuffed with peas, fried mushrooms, and baked eggplants.

Mediterranean Pashtida

The Book of New Israeli Foods, Janna Gur

Makes two 10-inch quiches

Janna Gur is a well-known Israeli food writer and editor and printed in the early 2000s.

Pashtidas are basically quiches with tons of veggies. This one would be great for Shavuot which is in early June this year.

The Crust (or use prepared pie dough)
2-1/2 cups flour
1 tsp salt
9 oz chilled butter, cut into pieces
2-1/2 oz cold water

Use a food processor and put the flour, salt, and pepper in and mix. Then add the butter and pulse until the mixture looks like crumbs. Add the water and pulse until the mixture is smooth. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour. Roll out on well-floured surface and line the 2 quiche dishes. Chill for another 30 minutes while you make the filling.

The Filling
1 eggplant, peeled and diced
Olive oil for baking
1 onion, halved and sliced thinly
1 leek, white part, sliced thinly
3 sweet red peppers, roasted over an open flame or in 400-degree oven until the skin chars. Cool in a plastic or paper bag and peel the skins off, remove the seeds and cut into strips.
1 cup fresh parsley or coriander, chopped
1 lb feta cheese, diced
20 cherry tomatoes, halved
2-1/2 oz shelled pumpkin seeds

Pour some olive oil over the eggplant cubes and bake at 400 degrees for about 20 minutes. Remove but leave the oven on.

Use a frying pan to sauté the onions and leeks in a little more olive oil until they are translucent.

Sauce
3 cups whipping cream
4 eggs
Pinch of nutmeg
2 cloves garlic, crushed
Salt and pepper

Combine all the ingredients into a smooth mixture.

Spread the onion-leek mixture on the pastry shell, lay the eggplant cubes and pepper strips on top, sprinkle the parsley or coriander, and then carefully pour on the sauce. Arrange the feta cubes and cherry tomatoes on top and then add the pumpkin seeds. Bake for about 25 minutes or until golden brown.

Chreime – North African Hot Fish Stew

The Book of New Israeli Food, Janna Gur

serves 4–6

I know I've written about Chreime before. Recipes are found in almost every Jewish cookbook I own. It's an important addition to the foods we think of as Israeli. Moroccan style of cooking has become very popular in Israel and many of the new chefs have this background. I've made Chreime with salmon, but any white, firm flesh fish would do. The key ingredient is caraway.

2-1/2 pounds fish in steaks or fillets
1/3 cup olive oil
10 cloves of garlic, crushed (Yep, it's a spicy dish)
2 tbs paprika
1 tbs cayenne pepper (or less, it doesn't have to be so spicy)
1 tsp ground caraway
1 tsp ground cumin (optional)
2 to 3 tbs tomato paste

Use a large frying pan and add the oil. Then add the garlic and spices and fry (carefully) over high heat until the oil is aromatic. Add the tomato paste and stir until it is blended with the oil. Add one cup of water and cook, covered, for 5 minutes. Carefully add the steaks to the sauce and bring to a boil. Then cover and lower the temperature. If the sauce doesn't cover the steaks, turn them once halfway through the cooking.

Cook for 10 minutes until done but firm and flaky. Serve over couscous or rice and sop up that sauce. ■

JCLP graduation, continued from page 1

kot celebration in the School of Social Work courtyard with an emphasis on welcoming the stranger.

Then, we enjoyed a warm and inviting Ann Arbor site visit at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, where we conversed with representatives of the JCC and its Early Childhood Center, Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, and Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor about what Jewish communal leadership looks like in Ann Arbor.

At our alumni seminar in November, both first and second year JCLP students spoke with over 35 alumni from across the country, with representation from all cohorts (Class of 2012 through Class of 2021).

In March, more than 80 people from across the country tuned in for the class of 2022's Communal Conversation about climate justice and the Jewish community.

And finally, one second-year student and one first-year student joined forces to plan an awesome Shabbaton for us all, during which we could relax, reflect, and create together, with restorative activities ranging from meditation to candle-making.

Unfortunately, our highly anticipated trips to New York City and Israel were canceled due to surging COVID cases. However, we are so looking forward to traveling to Cleveland, Ohio, for the JPro22 conference this month.

Thinking back to a whirlwind of invaluable field placements, stimulating seminars, and a ton of coursework over the past two years, the thought of graduating from JCLP is bittersweet.

We of the class of 2022 specifically asked for Goldman to serve as our keynote speaker, as we missed her guidance and wisdom during our second year while she was on sabbatical.

And, we thoroughly enjoyed our time with Mishkin this year, who wove in an illuminating curriculum on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict that kept us curious, fully engaged, and committed to lifelong learning.

"Returning to JCLP as the interim director has been such a meaningful experience and a huge privilege. It's been amazing to see how much the program has grown over the past eight years — a true reflection of Karla's leadership, the strength and passion of JCLP students, and the support of the Southeast Michigan Jewish community," Mishkin said. "Though my time as interim director comes to a close over the summer, I'm excited to stay engaged with JCLP as an alumna and community member."

As we of the class of 2022 bid a fond farewell to JCLP and start our next chapters as Jewish communal leaders, social workers, and professionals, we thank community members, "our second years" (the class of 2021), "our first years" (the class of 2023), our exceptional program coordinator Paige Walker, Mishkin, and Goldman for envisioning, building, and strengthening Jewish community with us during an extraordinary time.

We will never be able to fully explain how much this experience and the Southeast Michigan Jewish community's support and engagement has meant to us.

We look forward to engaging with you and JCLP as alumni and hope you'll join us on Sunday, May 1, at 10:30 a.m. in person or via livestream in celebrating our graduating students.

Email Paige Walker at vpwalker@umich.edu for the link to RSVP. ■

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The seven weeks between Pesach and Shavuot, the importance of respect for each other, and refining ourselves

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, Chabad House

As it is known, the seven weeks between Passover (Pesach) and Shavuot (the day of the receiving of the Torah) are 49 days. What are we supposed to do during those seven weeks? There is a special mitzvah from the Torah to count each day as a mitzvah unto itself (The counting of the omer/sefirah). After counting 49 days we have the holiday of Shavuot.

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein

During this period, it is also customary to observe a mourning period. Why is there a mourning period? Because during the seven weeks, the great Rabbi Akiva lost 24,000 students to a plague. They all passed away during those seven weeks. The Talmud tells us the reason for the plague that caused all those deaths. The reason given is that the rabbis did not show proper respect and honor to each other. Therefore, to mark this tragedy that took place, we conduct ourselves in a form of mourning expressed by not taking haircuts and not having marriage ceremonies or other activities expressing happiness. But, as we know in Judaism, it's not enough just to mourn a tragedy that took place in the past; we also have an obligation to improve ourselves and to see how we can correct the fault — such as the lack of respect and honor for each other. Therefore, the way to correct this is to emphasize, even greater, the mitzvah and precept of loving one's fellow Jew — that we are expected to treat each other in a respectful and loving manner.

Here comes the question: Why did God make it such that people don't look alike — nor do they think alike? The result of people thinking differently can be a lack of respect towards others due to disagreements. If one person thinks one way and their friend thinks differently, he might say, "No, you don't know what you are talking about because it's supposed to be the way I see it." And that's where the disagreement arises. So why did God create it this way? Why did God make it such that people think differently from one another? Certainly, it wasn't to cause contentious arguments! On the contrary, the purpose for God creating this concept that people should think differently was to help people to get to the depth of the concepts and look for the truth. If everyone thought the same way, then we wouldn't be forced to prove our point and we wouldn't be able to reach a deeper level of understanding. It's only by having this disagreement that causes one to think more deeply to see why they feel that they are more correct than the other person. The other person will think that they, themselves, have the correct opinion and hashing it out will help them come to the truth. This is what we require from a person — that they should refine their behavior, feelings, and thoughts in order to cleanse them of any personal agenda. What the person should strive for is to look for and reach the truth. Then, when one takes their personal agenda out of the picture and looks for the truth, then when an argument with another person ensues, they are not viewed as an adversary or challenger to him on a personal level. On the contrary, through the argument becoming a joint search for the truth rather than perceived as a personal attack, it will cause both of them to come to one conclusion — the truth.

This is how we spend the seven weeks of counting the sefirah — counting the days. The word sefirah means to cleanse or refine, so this is a time in the year that we take to refine ourselves and look for the truth and not, God forbid, to use the fact that we think differently to cause someone else to appear less significant. On the contrary, this should help a person come to a higher and deeper level by having a different point of view.

This is the lesson that we learn from the students of Rabbi Akiva — that they were lacking respect for each other's differing opinions — instead of viewing their colleagues as helpers in their quest for the unity of truth — they used it in the way of the opposite of unity. This is what we learn from the story of Rabbi Akiva's students — that we should refine ourselves by viewing the fact that someone else has an opinion different from our own and using that in a way that will help us better understand our own point of view while, at the same time, respecting another's ideas. Eventually this will lead to great unity between all parties.

With this we can explain why there is a custom during six of the seven weeks between Pesach and Shavuot that we read the six chapters of Pirkei Avot (Ethics of Our Fathers) because that is a good time to refine our character traits and areas that need to be refined. It is a time of the year that a person should look into themselves to correct their character traits, and therefore we study the Ethics of Our Fathers at this time. The fact that we refine ourselves during these weeks will help us prepare ourselves for the holiday of Shavuot — the holiday of receiving the Torah. If anything, as the rabbis tell us, the purpose of the Torah is to bring peace into the world and promote unity among all people. This is what the giving of the Torah is — to unite the physical and the spiritual — to unite Heaven and Earth. Same thing is on Earth — people should be united. Therefore, before we receive the Torah we work on ourselves to refine ourselves and through that we get to the coming of the Moshiach (Messiah) when the whole world will be in peace. ■

Orthodox Minyan in May

For all events, please contact Rabba Yael, rabbayael@annarborminyan.org, for location or with any questions.

Sunday, May 1, 8 p.m.
Women's Rosh Chodesh Gathering at the home of a community member

Wednesday, May 4, 12:30 p.m.
Join us for a Yom HaZikaron (Israel Remembrance Day) service

Thursday, May 5, 6 p.m.
Celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut (Israel Independence Day) with a festive dinner, Israeli music and arts and crafts. RSVP required to rabbayael@annarborminyan.org

Wednesday, May 11, 12:30 p.m.
Parsha Lunch and Learn: Explore themes of the weekly parsha.
Zoom Link: https://bit.ly/ParshaLunchandLearn

Thursday, May 9, 8 p.m.
Lag B'Omer bonfire

Wednesday, May 25, 12:30 p.m.
Parsha Lunch and Learn Parshat Bechukotai: Walking in God's Ways.
Zoom Link: https://bit.ly/ParshaLunchandLearn

Sunday, May 29, 9 a.m.
Children's Shavuot Learning and Craft ■

Discover the values that shape Judaism's civil code

Beginning Wednesday May 25 at 7:30 p.m., Rabbi Aharon Goldstein of Ann Arbor Chabad House will offer a fascinating course on personal ethics in the light of Jewish civil law. "Beyond Right," a new six-session course by the acclaimed Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI), explores ethical questions big and small.

Can you help yourself to someone else's possessions if you are sure they won't mind? Must you forgive and accept a repentant antisemitic tormentor? If your neighbor blocks your sunlight with a two-story fence, do you have legal recourse? Do you have a legal obligation to report someone's plans to commit a violent crime?

"Many people are surprised to discover the attention Jewish law devotes to disputes between neighbors, ethical dilemmas involving the workplace, and maintaining a peaceful and moral society," says Rabbi Goldstein. "They assume Jewish law mostly addresses religious practice."

The course, approved for Continuing Legal Education in many states, will explore six foundational Jewish values that underlie the practical application of Jewish civil legislation, translating abstract principles into detailed guidance on common real-life scenarios.

"The JLI course 'Beyond Right' explores fundamental topics that are of vital importance for any just society in light of the profound teachings of the Jewish legal tradition," said Professor David Flatto of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Faculty of Law. "It highlights the central values and commitments that are at stake in addressing these issues. I commend JLI for developing this rich and illuminating course."

Informative, practical, and insightful, "Beyond Right" is sure to generate an appreciation for Jewish law as a distinctive Jewish system that can be utilized as a source of guidance and clarity when one is faced with professional or personal dilemmas. Mr. Martin Pritikin, Dean of Concord Law School at Purdue University, has praised "Beyond Right" as a course that "helps shine a light on what it means to be a nation living under the rule of law, and indeed, what it means to be human."

The course will be offered over Zoom. Sign-in information will be provided upon enrollment.

Interested students may call 734-995-3276 or visit www.myJLI.com for registration and for other course-related information. ■

Obituary

Our dear friend Herb Katz, of blessed memory, passed away in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on Shabbat (Saturday), March 12. He was 91 years old. Herb was born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1931 to Dr. Phillip Katz and Riva Katz, and is survived by his brother Gary who lives in California. He had a large family of aunts, uncles, and cousins who remembered him as a "sweet guy" and appreciated his "delightful giggle." Herb was a quiet man, but his generosity, kindness, compassion, and sense of humor spoke volumes.

Herb Katz (plaid shirt) with some of his family in AA on June 13, 2021.

Herb attended Scott High School in Toledo, did his undergraduate and graduate work at the University of Michigan majoring in French, and then studied French in France. He subsequently taught French at UM and later worked in the Ann Arbor City Clerk's office until his retirement in 1996.

After returning from a trip to Israel in 1973 towards the end of the Yom Kippur War, Herb was inspired to connect to his Jewish heritage and expand his knowledge of Judaism. He studied with Rabbi Kagan, of blessed memory, and Rabbi Goldstein, and traveled to Crown Heights, New York, in 1975 where he met the Chabad-Lubavitcher Rebbe, of blessed memory, and his students.

In 1975 Herb was very much involved in the founding and support of Chabad House of Ann Arbor. Before Rabbi and Esther Goldstein arrived in Ann Arbor, Herb helped Rabbi Kagan locate the Chabad House.

At Congregation Chabad, Herb was a remarkable contributor. He led Shabbat services for years, served as a Gabbai, and, with his Toastmasters background, gave inspired thoughts on Torah. Herb also volunteered for and supported many other activities at Chabad including Camp Gan Israel, UM Student activities, packaging holiday gift packages, and even babysitting! As Rabbi Goldstein put it: "He was a person you could always rely on."

We will all miss Herb!

Herb was buried at the Nusach Hari Cemetery in Ferndale, Michigan on Sunday March 13. ■

Dror Israel in Ukraine, *continued from page* **1**

in hotels. The convention center has rows of black cots that look like the lounge chairs you find by a pool. The overhead lights are never turned on, so when the sun goes down it's dark and that's it.

Poland has massive governmental and civilian organization around this crisis. We were told that Poles want the refugees to become citizens and join the economy. There is a strong protective police presence around the center, and no one goes in without a bracelet tag, in order to protect the refugees. Still, there is theft and no sense of privacy or comforts of home.

These refugees are both ethnic Ukrainians and Roma. The Ukrainians are quick to blame the Roma for theft and are hesitant to let their children play with them.

Some kids are desperate for hugs and Diana was the poster child for that. She barely let me leave her side. Different little girls kept coming over to play with her, but she was possessive of me. Finally, I understood that all those little girls were her sisters. I believe they were a Roma family.

Today, moms and grandmothers gathered at the windows of the playroom to see their kids laugh and play for the first time in a while. I think they enjoyed it as much as the kids.

I'm somewhat protected from the harsh situation because I don't speak Russian. I don't have to hear questions about where the dads are, or brothers are. The Jewish families that are desperate to get to Israel and can't reach the Jewish Agency. The families that heard about a bus heading to Lodz and they had to quickly get their things together and go. The kids who are called out of play to be told their dad was killed in battle (happened at least twice today).

Many kids drew pictures of Ukrainian flags. I never felt the urge to draw the American or Israeli flag as a child. Not because I don't love my countries, but because I never imagined I might not go back to them. One little girl drew a Ukrainian flag and a Polish flag with an X through it because "life here is hard and I don't have anything. At home I had a lot of things and I miss that."

Day 3

Today Yelena and I tried to help a group of adults and they were listing languages we might have in common. Suddenly one woman said "Deutsch". Like a gut instinct, I said "*Ja! Ich kann Deutsch*" (Yes, I know German). Like my 11 (!) years of studying German prepared me for this exact moment. I gave her the instructions on how to get to the donations office and was thoroughly pleased with myself, I have to say.

Later, I hung out with kids who know some English, encouraging them (*Englis charasho*! Good English!) to use whatever words they have. One reason I loved those interactions was because the kids did too, because they felt that even though I'm there to help them they are responsible for me, like it's their job to translate for me and teach me words.

The situation here is far from perfect. Some people would prefer to camp out at the central station in Warsaw so they can hop on a train quickly. Some families have connections and find a way to their next stop on their own. Sometimes, a loudspeaker will broadcast announcements like "There is a charter bus going to Austria with room for X number of women and X number of children arriving in 20 minutes" and the family must decide quickly whether to get on the bus. Some families don't even understand where they are. We say Warsaw and they can't quite believe it.

It's part of being a refugee. Untethered in the world with their lives flatlining around them. The teens describe the experience as "Not just boring … scary boring." Some of the children blame their moms for bringing them to a situation they don't understand, and the mothers are hurt, alone, and overwhelmed. We hear the stories and think "How can we do more," but we recognize that even the small amount we do brings so much relief.

The Roma are an interesting piece of the dynamic. Nomadism is part of their culture, so they're usually on the go. Some of the Roma teens said this was one of the most comfortable places they've ever lived. They said, at least Poland wants them. They never felt included in Ukraine and now everyone around them is wandering like they are.

Day 4

Today Kristina drew a picture of me. My connection to this little girl has moved beyond language. She decides what she wants to do, and I say "yes" and then I ask questions she clearly doesn't understand and she says "yes" anyway.

She is just as responsible for me as I am for her. If a child starts speaking to me in Russian, she tells them "Sophia doesn't speak Russian. What do you need?"

Kristina asked me to draw a picture of her. I drew her lying in a hammock on the beach with her cat and bird that she had to leave at home. Since I was little, that was my ideal happy place and that's where I wanted her to be too: relaxed, safe and happy.

Two or three more girls drew pictures of me. It felt weird that the two things drawn most often in that room were the Ukrainian flag and me. I thought about how academics who will study art from this war will be baffled by this.

I moved on to three siblings whose favorite thing was to just join hands and circle around. It's the best example I have for how sweet and innocent these kids are. It made me think of my own threesome of siblings. We love each other a lot and are very close, but I'm not sure we were ever so innocent that we found joy in just holding hands and spinning.

One of our big successes has been with the teens. At first there was nothing for them to do. They would lie on their cots and just stare at their phones. We invited them to come play soccer outside and just leave their phones for five minutes. They played for a while, Roma and Ukrainian teens together. Others chose to sit with us and answer our questions. When we came back after our break, they were still sitting and talking, and more teens had joined them. It was gorgeous.

Day 5

Kristina was the director, writer, and star of the play today, a cute Russian story called *Kalubok* (*The Gingerbread Man*). We were more than happy to let her direct.

I asked her how long she had been in Poland, and she cried and buried her face in my shoulder. Once she calmed down, she explained that she had just heard from a friend who is stuck back at home about how scary things are. Sometimes the kids act so normal that I forget they have hairline triggers that can remind them of something horrific.

Today there was an actual exhibition in the convention center. The space next to the refugees was hosting a display of furniture and home decor. The parking lot was full of fancy cars and people walked around in suits, with Gucci bags. I walked past and was engulfed by a cloud of perfume. It seemed so tactless to have those two things next door to each other.

Day 6

I thought Russian and Ukrainian would be different like Portuguese and Spanish, but it seems to be more than that. Many of the kids do speak Russian, but some little ones think that's what they're speaking when they're actually speaking Ukrainian. The Poles dislike speaking Russian so much that sometimes they won't even answer a Russian speaker. One of the other volunteers who is Polish speaks to the kids in English because he figures there's more chance of them knowing English than Polish. That really surprised me.

Day 7

We told the kids we were leaving tomorrow to give them time to process the change. Some of them have been here with us from the beginning. Kristina looked sad. I typed into Google Translate that we were going, that my friends were coming, that I'll miss her. I saw that she didn't understand me, so I called a Russian speaker over to tell her. She ran out of the room, crying. We followed her to her cot and explained to her mom that we were going, and our friends would replace us. Kristina cried and wouldn't look at us. So, we gave her some space and went off to cry ourselves.

How lucky I am. At the end of this meaningful, beautiful, challenging week, I get to go home. To my bed. To my friends and loved ones. To the country I chose. To my dog who has a stable home, which is more than these kids have.

My maternal great-grandparents left Ukraine after the chaos of World War I and started over in a home far away. I wish I could have asked them about it, but I heard their stories generations later, and they didn't shake me the way these kids' stories do. I wonder if in a few generations their stories will be the same for their great grandchildren. I hope they don't lose any importance or weight.

I hope the world can bring an end to this senseless war. If any of my readers finds meaning from my memories, please talk to me about them so that the faces of these children will stay in my heart.

You can make donations toward Dror Israel's work in Ukraine at https://www.drorisrael.org/campdrorukraine. ■

Simchas and Sorrows

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends condolences to:

Natalie (Roger) Palay on the death of her mother, Lorraine Mitz, April 2.
Bob Merion (Debbie Merion) on the death of his father, Milton C. Merion, April 3.
Liz Fried on the death of her sister, Barbara Marko, April 6.

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends mazel tovs to:

Lisa and Howie Saulles on the birth of their grandson, Theodore Oren Zoldan, born on Saturday, March 12.
Kathy and Marty Ludington on the birth of their grandson, August Ian Ludington, born on Wednesday, March 23.
Lee Greenberg on their simchat mitzvah, May 7
Rachel Mickey on her bat mitzvah, May 14.
Mara Rotenberg on her bat mitzvah, May 21.
Landyn Samberg on his bar mitzvah, May 28.
Mazel Tov to Elaine & Barry Margolis on the birth of their grandson, Jordan Reid, son of Erin & Daniel Tochen.

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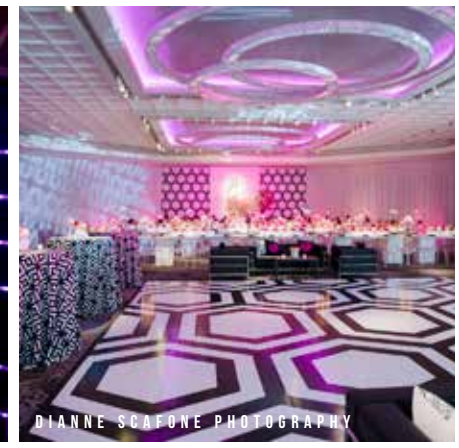
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